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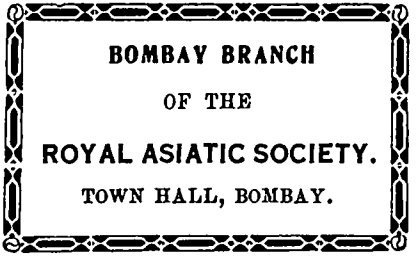

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LETTERS

OF

MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ.

VOL. II.

Printed by S. Hamilton, Weybridge.

LETTERS

OF

MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ

TO

HER DAUGHTER

AND

HER FRIENDS.

17669
ac

AN ENLARGED EDITION,

TRANSLATED FROM THE PARIS EDITION OF 1806.

IN NINE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:

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1811.

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LETTERS

OF

MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ, &c.

[The Letters with an asterisk before the number are new Letters.]

LETTER CXLVIII.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO MADAME DE GRIGNAN.

*The Rocks, Sunday, Nov. 1, 1671.

IF the first letter of Coulanges's, which was lost, was like the other three, I could absolutely cry for vexation; for no one can write better: you make a little dialogue between you that is worth all that can be said in the common way, each throws in his part so pleasantly. With regard to you, my dear child, I understand you perfectly, when you consent that Coulanges should set out to-morrow, rather than stay with you all his life-time. You dread that kind of eternity, as I dread going in a litter with any one: there is only one person in the world with whom I would consent to go; I shall not tell you who. I am very glad to be acquainted with *Jacquemarre and Marguerite**. I fancy myself with

* The two figures are so called that strike the hours on the clock in the steeple at Lambesc.

you all, and think I see you and Coulanges. I hope to alter your dress when I get to Grignan, and to make you quite smart: but no more pregnancies, my dear Grignan, I affectionately conjure you; have some pity on your charming wife, and let her lie, like good fallow-ground, for a while; promise me but this, and I will love you from the bottom of my heart. I can easily guess, my dear child, what your apprehensions were in the fear of losing your chief president; your imagination goes too fast, for there is no danger; mine too plays me the same tricks every moment: I fancy all that is dear or good to me is on the point of being torn from me for ever, and my heart is filled with such bitter pangs, that if they were as lasting as they are violent, I should sink under them. On these occasions, we should call to our assistance an entire resignation to the dispensations and will of God. Does not M. Nicole expatiate admirably on that subject? I am quite in raptures with him: I never met with his equal. It is true, the indifference he requires of us about worldly esteem or censure, demands more than human perfection. I am less capable than any one of entering into his opinion here, at least in practice; yet it is still a pleasure to meditate with him on the subject, and to reflect properly on the vanity of being affected with pleasure or concern for such a bubble; perhaps, from being convinced of the truth of his arguments, we may in time make use of them on some certain occasion. In short, it is a real treasure to have so good a mirror in which to view the weakness and impotence of our own hearts, however we may act. M. d'Andilli is no less charmed than ourselves with this excellent work.

M. de Coulanges has won your money, you say; but surely you had laughing enough for it. Nothing can equal what he wrote to his wife. I do not think I shall

part with him this winter, I shall be so happy to converse with a man who has seen and admired you so lately: as for Adhémar, since he is a wicked creature, I will turn him out of doors: to be sure, he has a regiment, and may enter by force. I am told that this regiment is an agreeable distinction; but is it not ruinous likewise? What I like best in it, is the king's remembering Adhémar in his absence; would to God he may remember his elder brother too, since he can go as far as Sweden in search of faithful servants*.

I love the coadjutor for loving me so long: chevalier Adhémar, approach, that I may embrace you: I am strangely attached to these Grignans: it will be long before M. Nicole's book will produce such fine effects in me as it has done in M. de Grignan. I have ties on all sides; but there is one in particular that I feel in my very marrow; and what can M. Nicole do there? Good God! how truly I can admire him! But how far am I from that happy indifference he wishes to inspire! Farewell, my dearest child! Do you not pity me for what I must feel now I know you are in the last stage of your pregnancy? Take care of yourself, if you have any love for me. I am grieved to see all your Parisian faces quit you one after another: you have your husband with you indeed, and his is a Parisian face. My child, you must not suffer yourself to be totally forgotten in that country: I must take you back with me: you must agree to it.

The abbé Effiat's marriage has not taken place yet; he has required time to consider of it: in my opinion the affair is at an end.

* See the note relating to M. de Pomponne, Letter 134.

LETTER CXLIX.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Wednesday, Nov. 4, 1671.

Ah! my dear child, what a strange scene passed this day two years at Livri*! How was my heart pierced with anguish at that period! but I ought not to dwell on such melancholy recollections. Let us talk of M. Nicole, it is a long time since we have said a word about him. There is a great deal of justice in your observation respecting the indifference he requires us to show to the opinion of the world; I think with you, that philosophy will hardly be found sufficient of itself, without the assistance of grace. He lays so great a stress on preserving peace and good fellowship with our neighbour, and recommends so many things to us in order to attain these, that it is next to an impossibility, after this, to be indifferent to what the world thinks of us. Guess what I am doing; I am beginning this treatise again: methinks I could wish to swallow it, like Ezekiel's roll. I am delighted with what he says on the subject of pride and self-love, which enter into all disputes, under the feigned name of the love of truth: in short, this treatise will apply to more than one in the world; but I cannot help thinking, that he had me principally in view when he wrote it. He says, eloquence, and a flow of words, give a *lustre* to the thoughts; I greatly admire that expression; I thought it beautiful and new. The word *lustre* is extremely apposite there, do you not think so? We must read this book together at Grignan. Were I to nurse you in your lying-in, it would be a fine

* This relates to a miscarriage of mad. Grignan at Livri, the 4th of November, 1669. See Letter 128.

opportunity: but what can I do for you at this distance? I pass my time in having masses said for you every day, and in a multitude of disagreeable thoughts, which can be of no service to you; but which, however, it is impossible to avoid. I have at present ten or twelve workmen in the air, raising the timbers of our chapel; they run backward and forward upon the outside of it like so many rats; they hold by nothing, and are every instant in danger of breaking their necks, and make my back ache with endeavouring to help them below. One cannot but admire the wonderful effects of Providence in the desire of gain, and be thankful, that such people are created, who are willing to do for a shilling what others would not do for a hundred thousand pounds. "O thrice-happy they who plant cabbages! when they have one foot on the ground, the other is not far off." I have this from a very good author *. We have planters too with us, who are forming new avenues; I hold the young trees myself while they set them in the ground, unless it rains so that there is no being abroad: but the weather almost drives me to despair, and makes me wish for a sylph to transport me to Paris. Madame de la Fayette says, that since you tell the story of Auger in so serious a manner, she is persuaded nothing can be more true; and that you are by no means jesting with me: she thought at first that it had been a joke of Coulanges's; and it looks very like it. If you write to him upon the subject, pray let it be in that style.

You see M. de Louvigni has not been able to purchase the post † which was his father's: but M. de la

* Panurge, in Rabelais.

† Of colonel of the French guards, enjoyed by marshal Gramont, with the reversion to his son, the count de Guiche, who had then obained leave of the king to resign.

Feuillade * is well provided for. I did not think he would ever have been so much in fortune's way. My aunt has had a fit of the ague, which has greatly alarmed me. Your daughter is cutting teeth, and pinches as you used to do, which is odd enough. What shall I tell you next? Consider, child, I am in a desert. La Troche, whom I expected here, is very ill; so that we are quite alone: we read a great deal, and spend the evenings and mornings as usual.

LETTER CL.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Wednesday, Nov. 11, 1671.

Would to Heaven, my dearest child, that to be continually thinking of you, with the utmost anxiety and tenderness, could be of any real service to you! one would think, it might not be altogether useless to you; and yet of what service can I be to you, at the distance of two hundred leagues? I do not doubt that every necessary precaution is taken where you are; that the best plan has been chosen between going to Aix and returning to Grignan; that a midwife has been sent for in proper time, to accustom you a little to the sight of her, and save you the chagrin and impatience that one naturally feels at seeing a new face: as to a nurse, your own women must take care of you on this occasion; they will remember mad. Moreau's way of managing; and as to yourself, my dear, you must be sure to keep yourself as quiet as possible, and not hazard a fever for the sake of talking, as you did at Paris. What more

* Francis d'Aubusson, duke de la Feuillade, and afterwards marshal of France, succeeded marshal Gramont, as colonel of the French guards, and was installed by the king the 4th of January, 1672.

shall I say to you? and what can I say to you that is not in the same style? It is natural, when the head is occupied with these things, to make them the subject of discourse; it is as natural for you to be tired of them: for my part, I never dislike things in their proper place; I ought not therefore to write to you, I think, till I know you are brought to-bed: and that would be very strange too; it is better, my child, that you should accustom yourself to thoughts which are so just and natural upon proper occasions. Perhaps you may be brought to-bed when this reaches you; but what will that signify, if it finds you in good health? I wait for Friday with the greatest impatience: see how continually I forestal time, which I was never fond of doing, and never did before, being of opinion, that time flies fast enough, without being hurried on. Madame de la Fayette informs me, she intends to write to you soon; I suppose she will not forget to tell you, that La Marans came into the queen's apartment the other night, while they were acting a Spanish play: she looked like one lost and bewildered, and began with an egregious blunder, by taking the upper-hand of madame du Fresnoi, which made her laughed at by every body, as a very ignorant and ill-bred creature.

Pomenars passed through our village the other day in his way to Laval, where he saw a great crowd assembled; and upon asking what was the matter, was told they were hanging a gentleman in effigy, who had stolen the daughter of the count de Créance; this happened to be himself: he got as near as he could to the scaffold, and finding the painter had made a frightful resemblance of him, he complained of it bitterly; and afterwards supped and slept at the house of the very judge that had passed sentence on him. The next morn-

ing he came here, and was ready to die with laughter, in telling us what had passed; however, he thought it best to decamp the morning after, as soon as it was light.

As to devices, my dear child, my poor brain is in a very bad condition for thinking of any, much less for inventing them; however, as there are twelve hours in the day, and above fifty in the night, my memory has furnished me with a rocket raised to a great height in the air, with these words; *Che peri, pur che s'innalzi:* I wish with all my heart it had been mine; I think it exactly made for Adhémar, *Let it perish, so it be exalted.* I am afraid I have seen this somewhere in the late tournaments, though I cannot exactly say where or when; for I think it too pretty to be my own. I remember also having seen in some book, a rocket on the subject of a lover who had been bold enough to declare himself to his mistress with these words, *da l'ardore l'ardire* *, which is pretty, but does not apply in this instance. I am not quite sure whether the first I have mentioned is in strict conformity to the rules of devices; for I do not perfectly understand them; all I know is, that it pleased me, and whether it was in a tournament, or on a seal, is a matter of no great importance; it is scarcely possible to invent new ones for every occasion. You have heard me a thousand times repeat that part of a line in Tasso, *l'alte non temo* †: I used to repeat this so often, that the count des Chapelles had a seal engraved with an eagle flying towards the sun, and *l'alte non temo* for the motto: a very happy device. Perhaps, my dear, this is all to no purpose. I care for nothing provided you are in health.

* My boldness arises from my ardour.

† I rise without fear.

LETTER CLI.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Sunday, Nov. 15, 1671.

THE question, whether you had not thrown away my last letters, was only an air; for though they do not merit the honour you do them, yet, I believe, after keeping those I used to write to you, when you were playing with a doll, that you would keep these: a box of a moderate size would not now be able to hold them; you must have a large chest on purpose.

There certainly never was any thing more humorous than what you say about Adhémars's name; and it is a fact, that there is no part of his letters blotted or scratched out, but his signature. I am a good deal puzzled about a name for his regiment: I have sent you my thoughts upon the subject before: you know I prefer the name of Adhémar, and would maintain it at the hazard of my life *; but I am afraid we are on the weakest side in this affair. I like the device † extremely, *Che peri, pur che m'inalzi.* This is the true language of a little sultan, a little Alexander, a proud, ambitious, rash, impetuous little marshal of France. I want sadly to know what you think of it, and where I have stolen it; for I am sure I did not make it ‡. As to M. Gri-

* The regiment mentioned here, is one of the regiments of horse called the *Gentlemen's Regiments*, which take the name of the colonel: this was called the *Regiment of Grignan*, and went by that name till the death of the marquis of Grignan in 1704.

† The body of this device was a sky-rocket.

‡ Father Bouhours, in his Discourse on Devices, mentions that of the count d'Illiers, the body of which was the same as the foregoing, and the motto *Poco duri pur che m'inalzi.*

gnan, I firmly believe him; I am sure that he loves a *thrush* better than you; and so in return I love an *owl* better than him. Let him examine his own heart; as he loves you, in the same degree shall I love him: there is but one way in which he can convince me of his love for you. But, my dear child, do you not sometimes wonder at the blunders and mistakes that arise from being separated so long, and placed at such a distance from each other? I am in pain for you when, perhaps, you are in good health; and when you are ill, a letter from you makes me perfectly easy at the time I receive it: but this satisfaction cannot last long; for after all you must be brought to bed: and I shall be miserable, and not without reason, till I hear of your safe delivery. You are resolved, it seems, to lie-in at Lombesc: have you engaged your surgeon? Deville's wife writes me word that you are acquainted with him; that is a great deal: but I fear, as he bleeds you, that he is young, and young people have not had much experience in this way. I know not what I say: but, above all things, take care of yourself: experience ought to have made you wise: for my own part, I am astonished at my extensive knowledge in this respect.

Did I tell you that I have planted one of the prettiest spots imaginable? In the middle of this spot I plant myself, where nobody will keep me company for fear of perishing with cold. La Mousse takes a few turns to get himself warm, and the abbé runs backwards and forwards in business; but I am fixed there, wrapped up in my long cloak, and thinking of Provence; for that thought never quits me. I wish much to hear of your being safely delivered, before I set out from hence; for you must know I look upon the fatigue of the journey, and the great anxiety of mind I shall necessarily endure, as two things impossible to be supported at once.

Let me know what name Adhémar has made choice of: I think he seems undecided about it. M. de Grignan stands up for *Grignan*, and with a great deal of justice. Rouville * is for the other. I think we must reduce it at last to *le petit glorieux* †.

You ask me if we have any green leaves with us: indeed we have a great many; they are mixed with yellow and brown, which you know makes an admirable mixture for a gown.

Madame de Senneterre, and madame de Leuville are two brisk widows: one has plenty of money, and the other of beauty. You do not mention your assembly; I think it endures longer than ours: at least let me hear something about your own health. What you call trifles and nonsense, is what I most delight in. Alas! if these are unpleasant to you, you should never read my letters, but burn them. Farewell, my dear and lovely child; I commend my life to your care.

LETTER CLII.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Wednesday, Nov. 18, 1671.

Good heavens! my dear child, in what a situation may this letter find you! It will be the 28th before you receive it; and, by that time, I hope and trust you will be safely delivered. I am obliged to repeat these words frequently to keep up my spirits; for my heart

* Francis count of Rouville, remarkable for the great authority he had gained by always telling the truth.

† M. de Guilaragnes saying once, that all the Grignans were proud *(glorieux)*, and being asked whether he thought Adhémar so, replied, *He is proudish (glorieusel)*, and ever afterwards he went by the name of *Le petit glorieux*, or the *Little proud one*.

is sometimes so painfully oppressed, that I know not what to do; but this is nothing more than natural on such an occasion as the present. I wait with impatience for my Friday's letters; and entreat those who have hitherto diverted themselves with keeping yours back, to suspend their game till you have lain in. They seem of late to have been busy with mine: I am quite in despair; for you know, that though I do not set great value upon my letters, yet I would choose that those to whom I write them should receive them; and as I neither write for other people, nor to have them lost, I regret all that do not reach you. What a fancy, to meddle with my letters! Surely we are too nearly related for our correspondence to furnish matter for curiosity; in short, it is unbearable; let us say no more about it. D'Hacqueville writes me word that he left mad. de Montausier at the point of death: I suppose she is dead by this time. If I am obliged to write to M. de Montausier and mad. Crussol*, I shall be more at a loss than poor Adhémar was, when he had to write to the king and the ministry. I cannot write now; since I have found that my letters do not come to your hands, mine have been fettered. I think sometimes, that while I am perplexing my head here with a thousand fancies, they may be firing guns, and rejoicing, for your safe delivery: this, however, I am not sure of; but must, as yet, languish in expectation. It freezes hard, and I am all day wandering in the woods. It will be fine weather, I suppose, till we set out, and then we shall have a deluge of rain. Such are the reflections in which I employ my time, and when one has nothing else to say, it is as well to finish.

* Mad. de Montausier's daughter.

LETTER CLIII.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Sunday, Nov. 22, 1671.

MADAME de Louvigni * is brought to-bed of a son: you see, my dear child, you must certainly have one too; you expect it so firmly, that, as you say, *La signora qui mit au monde une fille,* was not more taken in than you would be, if such an accident were to happen. I pray incessantly for the happy termination of an event upon which my life depends more than yours. I do not think I shall be able to leave this place till my mind is at rest upon the subject. There is no carrying such a cruel disquiet with one on the road, where there will be no chance of having a letter from you: it is you therefore, my dear child, that detain me.

I am extremely concerned at the dangerous state of health of your first president †: his death will be a very great loss to you; besides the misfortune of having so young, so elegant, and so handsome a man, torn from you in this manner: if he recovers, it will be next to a miracle: I am sure I never thought I should take much interest in a first president of Provence; but Provence is become my country since you have inhabited it.

Madame de Richelieu has at last stept into mad. de Montausier's place; what joy to some! what vexation to others! Such is the way of the world! You are greatly beloved by all that family: for my part, I am very little interested in these changes; and keep up my connexions at court with no other view than that of

* Mary Charlotte de Castelnau, wife of Anthony Charles count de Louvigni, afterwards duke de Gramont.

† Henry de Forbin Oppede.

being serviceable to you in your absence. I have had a letter from M. de Pomponne full of the most sincere and affectionate expressions of friendship: he is highly satisfied with his royal master; and will, I am certain, fully answer the good opinion every one has formed of him.

I have no doubt of the history of Auger being true, nor ever had; it was only a notion of mad. de la Fayette's, from a knowledge of Coulanges's odd way. She believes it now as firmly as myself. Winter reigns here in all its horrors. I am either walking about my gardens, or sitting by the chimney-corner: there is no taking any diversion: if we are not by the fire-side, we must be running about to catch heat. I shall pass two more Fridays at the Rocks, by which time I hope to hear of your safe delivery. M. de Grignan is in justice obliged to take as much care of me now, as I did of him on a similar occasion *.

LETTER CLIV.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Wednesday, Nov. 25, 1671.

My letters from Paris inform me of the death of your first president: I cannot express what concern it has given me. He was a very worthy man, as well as a very handsome one; but what rendered him of still greater consequence to me, was the friendship that subsisted between you, and the advantages you might have derived from such a connexion. When I have exhausted this subject, I return to myself again, and find my heart overwhelmed with anxiety for your health,

* See the Letter of 19th November, 1770.

and the thoughts of your approaching confinement. I do not know how it happened that I had not the wit to advise you to do as you have done, considering that I was equally fearful of your encountering the small-pox at Aix, and of returning all the way back to Grignan: you had no alternative therefore, but to remain where you were, which is certainly the wisest step you could have taken. I suppose you have been bled; I suppose too, that you have taken all the precautions that are necessary: in short, I suppose and hope all will go right. Madame de Louvigni has set you a very good example; but I shall suffer much in waiting for the happy tidings; I could wish to receive them here. I expect your Friday's packet with my usual impatience. I suppose you will say a good deal on the death of the poor president: I am apprehensive it may have shocked you, and have been of ill consequence in your present situation. My own condition will not let me say any more to you now; though it is not for want of leisure, I assure you; on the contrary, it is that alone which makes me yield to the train of anxious thoughts that haunt me repecting Provence; and as I have nothing but melancholy things to say to you, which I know you are in no need of at present, I shall take my leave of you, with the assurance that I am most affectionately yours.

LETTER CLV.

TO THE SAME.

The Rochs, Sunday, Nov. 29, 1671.

It is impossible, wholly impossible, my dearest child, for me to express the joy I received on opening the blessed packet that contained the news of your safe de-

livery. When I saw a letter in it from M. de Grignan, I did not doubt for a moment that you were brought to-bed; but then it was so strange a circumstance not to see the usual dear hand-writing on the superscription! However, there was one from you dated the 15th; but, though I saw it, I passed it by unnoticed, that from M. de Grignan having strangely confused my poor intellects. At last I ventured to open it with trembling hands and a beating heart, and found every thing that my most ardent wishes could desire. How do you imagine one acts in such an excess of joy? Ask the coadjutor; you cannot be a judge yourself, having never experienced it. Shall I tell you, then, how one acts? Why the heart sinks, and tears flow apace without our being able to prevent them. This was precisely my case: I wept, my dear child, but with infinite pleasure: tears like these are accompanied with sensations not to be equalled by the most lively joy. As you are a philosopher you will be able to account for these effects; I can only feel them. I am now going to have as many masses said by way of thanksgiving to God for this inestimable blessing, as I did before to request it of him. Were my present feelings to continue for any length of time, life would be too agreeable; we must therefore enjoy happiness while it is in our power; sorrow and vexation will return but too soon. How charming it was to have a boy after all, and to have him named after Provence *! It was every thing that could be wished. My dear, I give you a thousand and a thousand thanks for the few lines you wrote me: they completed the measure of my felicity. The abbé is as transported as myself, and our La Mousse is in raptures. Adieu, my angel; I have many letters to write besides this.

* The procurators of Provence were his godfathers, and gave him the name of Louis Provence.

LETTER CLVI.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Wednesday, Dec. 2, 1671.

AFTER my first transports of joy had a little subsided, I began to perceive, my dear child, that I should still be anxious for letters from Provence next Friday to complete my satisfaction. Lying-in women are liable to so many accidents, and your tongue is so well hung, as M. de Grignan says, that till nine days at least are happily over with you, I shall not leave this place with any degree of comfort or pleasure: so I shall wait for my letters, and then set out: those of the following Friday, I shall receive at Malicorne. I am surprised at no longer feeling the load at my heart, which used to oppress me day and night, while I was in doubt about your safety. I am now so completely happy, that I cannot cease returning thanks to the Divine Being, for my peace of mind, which I did not expect so soon. I have received letters of compliment without end and without number from Paris, and here the young lord's health has been drank for miles round. I have distributed money for drink, and feasted my own people like kings. But nothing gave me greater pleasure than a compliment I received from Pilois *, who came this morning with his spade upon his back, and said, "My lady, I am come to let you know that I am heartily glad to hear that my lady countess has got a fine boy." Now this is to me worth all the fine speeches in the world. M. de Montmoron † came hither post: among other

* Madame de Sévigné's gardener.

† He was of the Sévigné family.

things we were talking of devices: he assures me he does not remember to have seen any where the one I proposed for Adhémar: he knew the one, with these words, *Da l'ardore l'ardire* *; but that is not the thing: the other, he says, is much more complete, *Che peri, pur che m'inalzi.* And whether it is my own, or borrowed, he thinks it excellent. But what do you say to M. de Lauzun? You know what a noise he made this time twelvemonth. Should we have believed it, if any one had told us, that in less than a year he would be a prisoner? *Vanity of vanities, all is vanity!* They say the new Madame is quite dazzled with her grandeur. You shall hear what kind of personage she is: when her physician was presented to her, she said, she had no business for one; that she had never been bled nor taken physic in her life; and that it was her custom, if she was ill, to take a walk of five or six miles, and that cured her at once. But let her go, and joy go with her. You see I write to you, as I would to one who has lain-in for a month. But now for M. de Grignan: he cannot be ignorant of what you must have suffered; and, if he really loves you, must it not give him the greatest concern, to be the cause of your being thus circumstanced every year? After such good reasons as these, I have no more to say to him on the subject, farther than to assure him, that I will not come to Provence if you are with child again. I wish he may take this as a warning: for my part, it would absolutely drive me to despair; but, however, I will keep my word: it will not be for the first time. Farewell, divine countess; I kiss the dear infant, for whom I have a great affection; but not so much as for the lady his mother: it will be a long while before he attains to that. I have a great

* This was a device of the maréchal de Bassompiere.

desire to hear some news of your assembly, the christening, &c. A little patience, and I shall know all; but this is a virtue I am not much practised in.

LETTER CLVII.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Sunday, Dec. 6, 1671.

The last letters were as necessary to my happiness, as those I received the week before. The joy of your being safely delivered was so exquisite, that being unable to bear its excess, I began to torment myself with apprehensions of the accidents which might follow. I then longed for a second packet, and now I have it, it is just what I could have wished. You have had the colic, you have had the milk-fever, but are now got over all. The coadjutor tells me, that the boy was three hours without making water, and that you were in the most dreadful fright imaginable. Upon my word! You make a fine figure with your motherly love! What a joke! Do you really love the child? But he is fair, and it is that that charms you! You love fair people; very civil indeed! M. de Grignan may well be jealous: you leave him, he says, for the first comer; the last comer he should have said: in short, this boy will make a great many jealous. The good coadjutor writes me a string of particulars worthy the pen of M. Chais, or mad. Robinet*. I fancy you and he fall out a little now and then: is it not so? I hope my presence is not necessary to make you friends: I should wish to find that matter thoroughly settled to my hands. But

* The one madame de Grignan's surgeon at Lambese, the other her midwife at Paris.

hark ye, good Mr. Secretary *, come this way a little if you please: and so you laugh at my device! You pretend to say it is to be met with in every book of that kind! It may be so; but a person who understands these things better than you, tells me he has never met with it. To tell you the truth, I never thought it was my own, and agree with you, that somebody else made it to my hands: but, be it as it may, you will at least own, that I could have no other view in the application than merely to give you pleasure. To return to you, my poor count, I am really sorry for you, I see plainly you are a mere cipher in comparison with this fair young gentleman. However, the balance will now be equal in your family, which unluckily was wanting before. But I really ask your pardon for the comparison of the *owl* †: I own it was a little shocking; but I was at that time quite incensed at you for openly proposing a *thrush* to my daughter: if you are sorry for your fault, I will be sorry for mine. I have a great desire to know something of your assembly; it would be vexatious to have it break up without coming to some conclusion. The bishop of Marseilles overwhelms me with civilities; he has given me an account of his dispute with the coadjutor, and of my daughter's health. They have heard of this dispute at Paris, and have sent me word of it, as if I held no sort of correspondence myself with Provence. Lord bless them! It is my own country. Farewell, my dear count, and you, brave Adhémar, and you my ever-dear, my ever-amiable woman in the straw. I think I must say to you, as Barillon said to me the other day: "Those that love you better than I do, love you too well." At such a distance, we scarcely say or do any thing properly; we cry when we should laugh, and

* M. d'Adhémar. † See Letter 151.

laugh when we should cry: we are frightened at young surgeons of sixty-four. In short, my child, these are the blunders of distance; to which let me add my total ignorance of Provence. Now you have an advantage on your side, which prevents you from being laughed at in turn, and that is your knowledge of the place where I am: all these things together will certainly oblige me to get nearer to you, and afterwards to go quite to Provence, in order to inform myself more fully upon the spot. As I am now easy on your account, I shall set out in about three days; so that I shall receive no more letters till I get to Malicorne. I cannot thank you sufficiently for the few lines you add in the letters I have from the Grignans.

Madame de Richelieu is now well settled: if mad. de Scarron had a hand in this, she is worthy of envy; for she must taste the most solid joy that this world can afford. I am told Vardes is coming back.

LETTER CLVIII.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Wednesday, Dec. 9, 1671.

I AM just going to set out, my dear, but leave my solitude with some regret, as I shall not find you at Paris. I much question whether I should have returned thither this winter, but for my Provence journey, which makes it in my way, it being impracticable to go all the way thither from hence, or to go to Paris as one does to Orléans. Well then, you may suppose me set out: I shall sleep at mad. de Loresse's, who is a relation of yours, to avoid the stones of Laval. I shall be there to-morrow: and Friday next I shall send to Laval for my letters, which will be brought me to Mêlé, where I

intend to pass the night; after that I shall think of nothing but Paris. If during this journey you should chance to be longer than usual without hearing from me, do not be uneasy about it. I am neither with child nor lately brought to-bed, nor am I afraid of a coach. I have no Avignon-bridge to pass: the weather is extremely fine; and I shall have nothing to interrupt me; as I am no longer under any concern about you, do not you be unhappy about me. I am loaded with compliments on the birth of my little grandson; of whom I should be glad to hear next Friday, and still more so of you. Poor M. de Lauzun is at Pignerol; for which M. d'Harroüis is in great affliction; but he tells me, that the news of your safe delivery, and of the birth and christening of your little boy, shot a gleam of joy to his heart, through all the sorrow in which it was whelmed: and I in return assured him, that his affliction had thrown a cloud over my joy. Adieu; my beloved child, we must part. I am overwhelmed with regret at leaving these woods. I will not tell you how great a part you have in my indifference for Paris. You know but too well already, how dear you are to me.

LETTER CLIX.

TO THE SAME.

Malicorne, Sunday, Dec. 13, 1671.

At length, my dear child, I am so far on my journey. It is the finest weather imaginable, so that I am very well able, as Madame says, to take a walk of five or six miles; as for La Mousse, he runs about like a wild thing: he is a little uncomfortable for want of sleep at night; for he has not been accustomed to inconvenience. I set out on Wednesday, as I told you I should;

I got to Loresse, where they insisted upon my having two of their horses, which at last I yielded to. We have now four in each coach, and fly like the wind. Friday I got to Laval, and stopped directly at the post-office, where I met with that honest, obliging, good man, all mire and dirt to his very neck, who was just arrived, and gave me your letters; I thought I should have kissed him: you will judge, from my talking in this manner, that I am no longer angry with the post; and in truth, the fault was not theirs; it is certainly, as you said, some enemy of Du Bois's *, who hearing him talk of our correspondence, and plume himself upon the employment we had given him, had, out of diversion, stole our letters from him. I did not discover it at first, thinking you wrote to me only once a week; but when I found that you wrote twice, I cannot easily express the vexation and grief I felt at the loss of the letters. But I return to the pleasure I had in receiving the packet, with two of your letters enclosed, from the dirty hands of the postilion: I saw him open his little mail before me; and at the same time, *frast, frast,* I opened mine, and found you were well. You write to me in Adhémar's letter; and then I have another from yourself, dated from your fire-side a fortnight after your lying-in. Nothing can exceed the joy this certainty of your health gave me. Let me beg you not to make too free with it, nor write me long letters; recruit yourself, and be very careful not to subject yourself to fatigue. Alas! my dear child, you were very ill. To have seen you suffer so tedious a labour would have killed me. They were forced to bleed you at last, it seems, and even began to be in some fears about you. When I think of the danger you were in, I shudder in-

* The post-master at Paris.

voluntarily; I am seized with a trembling all over: in short, it makes such an impression on my imagination, that I cannot compose myself to sleep afterwards. I have imparted what you told me to mad. de la Fayette and to d'Hacqueville; I thought as you do, and that la Marans might now be easy, or rather uneasy, as she had no longer a subject for her very obliging and modest conjectures: I cannot but laugh at your thinking of her. But the post waits for me, as if I were lady governess of Maine; and I take a pleasure in making him wait, to show my consequence. But I must say a word about my little boy; ah! how pretty he is; his large eyes are good signs of your having played your husband fair; but I beg his nose may not long remain between hope and fear. It is a strange kind of uncertainty that! Never had a little nose so much to fear and so much to hope; there are many noses, for him to make choice of; but since he has got large eyes, let him endeavour now to please you, or else he will only have your mouth, as it is small; but that is not enough. My child! you doat on him; but resign him to Providence, that he may be preserved to you. What is the reason of his being so very weak? It was that surely that prevented him from helping himself in the birth; for I have heard people who have had children say, that this weakness in the child is the occasion of the difficulty in the mother. Be very careful of the dear little creature; but at the same time resign him to Providence, if you hope to receive him from thence: this is a very Christian and *grandmotherly* repetition; mad. Pernelle * would say the same. Adieu, my dear countess: my friend the postilion is out of all patience; I must not abuse his civility: I shall receive no more let-

* A ridiculous character in the comedy of Tartuffe.

ters from you till I get to Paris: I shall be charmed to embrace my poor little girl; you do not think of her now, and therefore I am determined to love her out of pure generosity.

LETTER CLX.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, Dec. 18, 1671.

I AM this moment arrived, my dear child; and am at my aunt's, surrounded, embraced, and questioned a thousand times, by all my family and hers; but I leave them all, resolved to pay my compliments to you as well as to other people. M. de Coulanges is waiting to take me home with him, where he insists I shall take up my abode, because one of M. de Bonneuil's sons has the small-pox; she very obligingly intended to keep it a secret; but the mystery was discovered, and they carried my little one to M. de Coulanges. I expect her here every minute, and shall then return with her; but my aunt is resolved to witness our first interview. It would have been a vexatious circumstance for me to have exposed the poor child, and to have been banished myself from the society of my friends for a month or six weeks, because mad. Bonneuil's child has the small-pox. Suppose me now at M. de Coulanges's, whom I adore, because he is always talking to me of you: but can you guess what happens between us? Why I cry, and my heart is so strangely oppressed, that I make a sign with my hand for him to be silent, and silent he is. He tells me, that when he saw you, you shut your eyes, and said, you were in my room; yes, truly, you were sure you were at Paris, for there was M. de Coulanges. He acted this very drolly, and it gives me great plea-

sure to find you have still a little of the mad-cap about you: I was frightened to death lest you should be always the governor's lady. My God! what a deal of conversation shall I have with M. de Coulanges! I entreat you to be careful of yourself, that is, be as much yourself as possible, and do not let me find you altered. I would have you likewise be attentive to your beauty: get fat; recruit yourself; and remember all the good resolutions you have made: and if M. de Grignan has any regard for you, he will give you time to recover yourself, otherwise it is all over with you, I can tell you; you will be always as thin as mad. de St. Hérem. I am glad I thought of putting this in your head, nothing can frighten you more than such a resemblance; take care then to avoid it. As for your little boy, the condition he was in does not reconcile me to chocolate: I am sure he has been burnt up; it is happy for him that he has got a little moisture since, and is recovered: he has been snatched out of the fire; I heartily rejoice with you at the circumstance.

FROM MONSIEUR DE COULANGES.

I SHUT my eyes, and on opening them again I behold the lovely mother, who is so much your delight and mine; by this I know I am at Paris; I am going to entertain her with all your perfections. Do you know that I am more bewitched with you than ever, and fear that I shall take the chevalier de Breteuil's place? I know this would not please M. de Grignan, and it is the only thing that gives me concern in so great an undertaking. But seriously speaking, fair countess, you are Nature's master-piece, and thus I represent you whenever I have occasion to mention you. I was yesterday at M. de la Rochefoucault's, where I met M. de

Longueville; we talked of nothing but Provence, and the bright planet that shines there. Adieu, my charming countess; I am looking at the man in the tapestry, who is opening his breast: believe me, if you could see mine at this instant, you would see my heart as you see his; a heart which is wholly yours, and languishes for you; but do not tell this to M. de Grignan. Your daughter is a little brown beauty; she is very pretty; here she is, kissing me, and prattling to me; but she never cries. I love her, that is certain; but not so well as I do you. There is no such thing as talking to your lovely mother about you; large round drops roll from her eyes. Good heavens! what a mother!

LETTER CLXI.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Wednesday, Dec. 23, 1671.

I WRITE to you now somewhat beforehand, because I want to have a little chat with you. Just as I had sent away my packet, the day I arrived here, Du Bois brought me the letter of yours which I supposed lost; you may guess with what pleasure I received it: I could not answer it then, for madame de la Fayette, madame de St. Geran, and madame de Villars, all came to welcome me to Paris. You seem to be in all the astonishment that might be expected from such a misfortune as M. de Lauzun's: your reflections on that subject are very just and natural; every person of understanding has made the same; but now it begins to be no more thought of. This is an excellent country for forgetting the unhappy. The state of despair in which he began his journey was such, that it was resolved not to quit him for a moment. When those who were with him

would have had him alight in a dangerous part of the road, where they were apprehensive of the coach being overset, he made answer: "Accidents of this kind are not made for me." He declares himself innocent of any thing relating to the king, and says his only crime is having too powerful enemies. The king has said nothing about the matter, a silence that shows sufficiently the nature of his crime. He imagined he was to have been left at Pierre-Encise, and accordingly, when he got to Lyons, he began by paying his compliments to M. d'Artagnan; but when he was informed they were carrying him to Pignerol, he sighed, and said, "I am lost." He was greatly pitied in all the towns through which he passed; and certainly his disgrace is great.

The day after he left Paris, the king sent for M. de Marsillac, and told him, that he gave him "the government of Berri, which was lately Lauzun's." "Sire," replied Marsillac, "let your majesty, who is so well acquainted with the rules of honour, be pleased to reflect, that I was no friend to M. de Lauzun; have the goodness to put yourself but for a moment in my place, and then judge whether I ought to accept the favour you are pleased to offer me."—"You are too scrupulous," said the king; "I know as much of that affair as any one, and see no reason you have to make any difficulty on that account."—"Since your majesty is pleased to approve it," replied Marsillac, "I have no more to say, but throw myself at your feet in grateful acknowledgement."—"But," said the king, "I gave you a pension of twelve thousand francs, till something better could be done for you."—"It is true, sir; I now return it to you again."—"And I," replied the king, "give it you a second time, and shall now do your gallant sentiments all the honour they deserve." Upon which he turned to his ministers, and acquainted them

with the scruples of M. de Marsillac, adding, "I admire the difference between these two men; Lauzun did not think it worth his while so much as to thank me for the government of Berri, nor even to take the least care about it; and here is one who expresses the most lively gratitude." The whole of this is strictly true; I had it from M. de la Rochefoucault. I thought this little detail would not be displeasing to you; if I was mistaken, let me know, in your next. This poor man is very ill in the gout, much worse than he was last year: he talks very frequently of you, and I believe loves you as if you were his own child. Mons. de Marsillac has been to see me. Every body talks to me of my dear child. I have at length taken courage, and been talking these twelve hours with M. de Coulanges: I cannot leave the man! it was great good-fortune that brought me to reside with him. I do not know whether you have heard that Villarçeaux, in speaking to the king about a post for his son, artfully took the opportunity of telling him, that some people had taken it in their heads to tell his niece *, that his majesty had some designs upon her; that, if it was so, he begged his majesty would make use of him, as an affair of that kind would be better in his hands than in any other; and that he did not doubt of success: the king burst into a laugh, and told him, "Villarçeaux, you and I are too old to think of attacking young ladies of fifteen;" and, like a generous and gallant man, made a jest of the old fellow, and spread the story about among the ladies. The *angels* are greatly enraged at their uncle for it, and have resolved never to see him again; and he, on his

* Louisa-Elizabeth Rouxel, known afterwards by the name of mad. de Grancei, when she was one of the dressers to Mary-Louisa of Orléans, queen of Spain: she was younger sister to Mary-Louisa Rouxel, countess of Marci. They were called *the angels*.

part, is a little ashamed of the figure he makes on the occasion. I write without disguise; for his majesty appears so much to advantage in all he does, that there is no occasion for mystery.

It is reported, that there were a great number of very beautiful things found in M. de Lauzun's cabinets; pictures without end; naked figures, one without a head, and others with the eyes put out; this was the lady *your neighbour* *; locks of hair, some large, some small, ticketed to avoid confusion, and a thousand pretty things of this kind: but I would not answer to the truth of all this; you know what a loose is given to invention on such occasions.

I have seen M. du Même, who has at length lost his dear wife. When he saw me, he began sighing and weeping, and I could not refrain from tears myself. Every body visits the family, and I would have you make him the compliment of condolence; you ought to do it for the remembrance of Livri, which you are still so fond of.

Is it possible, that my letters should be so entertaining as you say they are? I do not think them so when they come out of my hands; I fancy they get it in passing through yours. It is very lucky for you that you do like them; for you are so loaded with them, that you would be heartily to be pitied, were it otherwise. M. de Coulanges wants sadly to know which of your ladies it is that has a taste for them; we reckon it a favourable sign for her, for my style is so loose, that it requires a good share of natural understanding and knowledge of the world, to be able to bear with it.

The abbé Têtu has time enough upon his hands now,

* Madame de Monaco, a Gramont by birth, whom Lauzun loved to distraction.

as he has no longer the hotêl de Richelieu; so we profit by it. You would think, to look at madame de Soubise, that she will have double twins at least. The king sets out the sixth of next month for Chalons; he is to make several other little tours, and some reviews by the way: his journey will last about twelve days; but the officers and troops will proceed farther. I have a notion of another expedition being on foot like that of the Franche-Comté. You know the king is *the hero of every season**. The poor courtiers are quite broke; they have not a penny left. Brancas asked me yesterday, very seriously, to lend him money upon a pledge he gave me his word, that he would never mention it to any one, and had rather, he said, be concerned with me than with another. La Trousse begged of me to let him into the secret of Pomenars' method of getting a genteel livelihood: in short, they are all put to their shifts. Farewell, my dearest countess, there is reason in every thing; this letter is swelled into a perfect volume. I embrace the laborious Grignan, seigneur Corbeau, the presumptuous Adhémar, and the fortunate Louis-Provence, on whom the fairies and astrologers have breathed good fortune. *E con questo mi raccommando:* and with this I take my leave.

LETTER CLXII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, Christmas-day, 1671.

The day after I received yours, M. le Camus came to pay me a visit. I spent the time in inquiring of him what his sentiments were with regard to the care, zeal, and assiduity, which M. de Grignan had shown in his

* A thought in a madrigal of mademoiselle de Scuderi's.

endeavours to bring the king's affairs in Provence to a successful issue. M. de Lavardin came in afterwards, and gave me his word, that he should take care to set it in its true light, in a proper place, before the day was over. I could not have met with two persons more suited to my purpose: they are bass and tenor. In the evening I went to M. d'Usèz, who still keeps his room, and we talked a good deal of your affairs. We had both heard the same news, and that an order was intended to be sent for dissolving the assembly, and to take another opportunity of showing them what it was to be refractory.

Indeed, my dear, my heart is heavy, very heavy, in not having you here with me. I should be much more happy, if I knew any one that I loved as well as I do you, for then I should have the means of comforting myself in your absence; but I have not been able to meet with your equal in my affections as yet, nor indeed any thing that comes near you. A thousand unlooked-for things offer themselves to awaken a more than common remembrance of you, and for the time I am completely overset. I am anxious to know where you propose going after your assembly is dissolved. The small-pox rages at Aix and Arles, Grignan is very cold, Salon very lonely; pray then, come and take an apartment with me; indeed you shall be very welcome. Adieu; you shall get rid of me for the present; this shall not be volume the second. I have no more news in my budget: if you have any questions to ask me, I will endeavour to answer them. I was last night at the Minims; I am going now to hear Bourdaloüe: it is said he begins to be very personal, and that the other day he made three pointed allusions to the retirement of Tréville*; he omitted his name

* Bourdaloüe often abused the pulpit in this way. He was told that

indeed, but every one knows whom he meant: they say, however, he outdoes every thing, and that no one ever preached before. A thousand compliments to all the Grignans.

LETTER CLXIII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Christmas-day, at 11 at night, 1671.

I HAVE written to you this morning already; but I have just received from M. d'Usèz the letter you sent by Ripert. You give a very good account of affairs in Provence. I wish to God the king may be contented with what the Provençals have agreed to do; your description of their heads, and the manner in which it is necessary to treat them, is admirable; and the coming-to of the good bishop, is quite natural. We have had madame Scarron here to supper; she says, that of the vast number of letters that madame de Richelieu has received, not one comes up to M. de Grignan's; she says, she kept it a long time in her pocket, and showed it to several people; that nothing could be better written, nor could any one express himself more elegantly, nobly, and affectionately, than he did with regard to the late madame de Montausier*: in a word, she

Boileau had introduced his name in a song: he replied, "Tell him, if he satirises me, I will sermonise him." He had served Moliere thus on account of his Tartuffe, which is as good a sermon as any of Bourdaloüe's.

M. de Tréville was a man of wit, a soldier, and a courtier, whose grief for the death of Madame led him suddenly from the world to a life of retirement and devotion. Other accounts of this personage will be found elsewhere.

* Madame de Richelieu succeeded madame de Montausier; as one of the ladies of honour to the queen.

seemed charmed with it; I vowed I would acquaint you with this. I shall communicate your letter to d'Hacqueville and M. le Camus. I think of nothing but Provence, and begin to look upon myself now in your neighbourhood. I expected your brother: they send him part of the way on account of the length of the journey. I have been to sermon; my heart was not affected, but that was perhaps my fault. Adieu, my dearest child.

LETTER CLXIV.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Wednesday, Dec. 30, 1671.

One sure sign of the little disposition I have to hate you, is, that I would with my own will write to you a dozen times a day: does not this proof, my dear, appear to you much like that of M. de Coulanges, when he made you the offer of passing the remainder of his days with you? Indeed, if that were to be the case, you would have enough to do; for I am as prolix in writing to you, as I am laconic when I write to others. I have inquired much of Ribert about your health. I am not pleased with you: you deserve to be scolded: you behaved in your lying-in as if you had been the wife of some Swiss captain: you do not take broths enough: you had not been confined three days, before you began to chatter and talk; you got up before the tenth day; and after all this you are surprised that you are thin! I was in hopes that you would have taken a little more care of yourself, and endeavoured to recruit and grow fat. Where did you get this whim of mimicking madame de Crussol? I am always striving to reform you, by setting examples before your eyes: this way

of going on has not affected her, but it will affect you, believe me: in short, you cannot offend or vex me more highly, than in spoiling your pretty face: you know how fond I am of it; ought you not then to take some care of it for my sake?

You are much in the right to say, that Provence is my fixed residence since it is become yours. Paris quite stifles me: I long to be on the road to Grignan. But, my dear child, how lonely you will be, if you return to your castle! Why, you will be like Psyché upon the mountains. I can have no content where you are not: this is a truth, the force of which I experience more and more every hour. You seem wanting to me every where, and whatever recalls you to my remembrance goes to my heart. The king's journey is as yet uncertain; but the troops still continue their march. Poor La Trousse is going, and Sévigné is already upon his way: they are to go to Cologne. They are quite wild about this expedition. Farewell, my angel; I am perfectly well at M. de Coulanges's, and shall take care to keep as far from the air of the small-pox as possible. I have no great relish for returning to that immense rambling house, where, instead of you, I shall meet only with mad. de Bonneuil. Coulanges is my dear delight: we are for ever talking of you. I shall give M. de la Rochefoucault your letter: I am persuaded he will like it much. I hate the direction of your letter when it is, *To the marchioness de Sévigné;* call me *Pierrot*. Your others are amiable, and excite a desire to read the rest.

LETTER CLXV.

TO THE SAME.

The first day of the New Year 1672.

I WAS last night at M. d'Usèz's. We came to a resolution to send you a courier. He promised to let me know the success of his audience with M. le Tellier, and whether he would have me bring madame de Coulanges* thither with me; but as it is now past ten at night, and I have not yet heard any thing from him, I shall write to you by myself. M. d'Usèz will take care to inform you of what he has done. There should be some endeavours used to soften the rigour of the orders, by representing, that it would be entirely depriving M. de Grignan of the power of serving his majesty, if he should by this means be rendered disagreeable to the province; and if, after all, it shall be necessary to send the orders, it is the opinion of the wisest people here, that it would be prudent to suspend the execution of them till an answer can be had from the king, to whom M. de Grignan has written as from a person on the spot, who is convinced that it would be best for his service to grant a pardon for this time at least. If you knew how some people blame M. de Grignan for the little regard he shows to his own country, in endeavouring to exact so strict an obedience, you would see how difficult it is to please every body, and it would have been still worse if he had done otherwise. Those who find such charms in his post, do not know the difficulties that attend it. The king's intended journey is now broken off; but the

* Madame de Coulanges was niece to the wife of M. le Tellier, minister of state, and afterwards chancellor of France.

troops continue their march to Metz. Sévigné is there by this time; La Trousse is going; and both of them fuller of loyalty than ready money. The archbishop of Rheims * is here; who first sends you his good wishes, and then acquaints you, that M. d'Usèz has not been able to see his father to-day: he assures me also, that the king is very well pleased with your husband; that he accepts of the present the province has made him; but, as his orders have not been punctually observed, he has sent *lettres de cachet* to banish the consuls. I can say no more to you by letter. All that remains now is, to be entirely devoted to his majesty's service; but, at the same time, to endeavour to manage a little the minds of the Provençals, which will be found the best means of having the king punctually obeyed in that country.

M. de la Rochefoucault sends you word, and I join with him, that if you are not pleased with the letter you wrote him, it is for want of knowing better: I think he is quite in the right; for it is full of life and spirit. You have an answer to it enclosed. Adieu, my dear countess, I think of you night and day. Furnish me with some opportunity of serving you: it will be a pleasing employment for my affection.

LETTER CLXVI.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Tuesday, January 5, 1672.

YESTERDAY the king gave audience to the ambassador from Holland, at which he would have the prince, marshal Turenne, the duke de Bouillon, and marshal Crequi present, that they might hear all that passed. The

* Charles-Maurice le Tellier.

ambassador presented his letter to the king, which was not read, though the ambassador proposed it; as the king said he already knew the contents, having a copy of it in his pocket. The ambassador expatiated largely on the justifications mentioned in the letter, and on the strict manner in which the States had examined their conduct to discover in what they could possibly have given offence to his majesty; that they were not conscious of ever having been wanting in the respect that was due to him; and yet, to their great surprise, they had heard that the extensive preparations his majesty was making were destined against them *; that they were ready to satisfy his majesty in every thing he should be pleased to require from them, and humbly implored him to remember the good-will his royal predecessors had ever shown them, to whom they owed their present flourishing condition. The king, with inimitable grace and dignity, replied, that he was not now to learn the endeavours that had been used to stir up his enemies against him; that he thought it but prudent to prevent a surprise, and that he found it necessary for his own defence to make himself thus respectable by sea and land; that after giving a few more necessary orders, he should, in the beginning of spring, take such steps as he might judge most advantageous for his own glory, and the good of his kingdom; and then gave the ambassador to understand, by a motion of his head, that he would have no reply. The letter corresponded exactly with the ambassador's speech, except that it concluded with assuring his majesty, that they (the States)

* The war against the United Provinces, for which Lewis XIV. had leagued with England and several German princes, was on the point of breaking out. The English began it in March by attacking the Dutch fleet, and, in their old way, made war first, and declared it afterwards.

would do whatever he should be pleased to order them, provided it did not oblige them to break with their allies.

The same day M. de la Feuillade was received at the head of the regiment of guards, and had the customary oaths administered to him by a marshal of France. The king, who was present, spoke himself to the regiment, and told them that he had given them M. de Feuillade for their *mêstre de camp*; and then, with his own hand, presented him with the pike *, which is commonly done by a commissioner appointed by the king; but his majesty was resolved that no mark of distinction or favour should be wanting on the occasion.

You know Langlée; he is as insolent and impertinent as possible: he was at play the other day with the count de Gramont, who, upon his taking too great liberties, said, "M. de Langlée, keep these familiarities till you play with the king."

Marshal Bellefond has requested leave of the king to dispose of his post †. No one will do it so well as he. Every body believes, and I especially, that it is to pay his debts, and retire from the world, to think of his salvation.

The procurator-general of the court of aids ‡ is made first president there: this is a great advancement for him. Do not fail to write to him on the occasion, one or other of you; and whichever it is, let the other add a line or two in the letter. The president Nicolai is restored to his post §. This is what may be called news.

* It was a custom then to receive the pike on such occasions.

† Of chief master of the household to the king.

‡ Nicolas le Camus.

§ Of first president of the chamber of accounts.

LETTER CLXVII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Wednesday, January 6, 1672.

So then, my dear child, you wish me not to weep at seeing you separated so many miles from me! but you cannot prevent this disposition of Providence from being very hard and painful to me: it will be a long time before I shall be able to accustom myself to it; but I will stop short, and not involve you in a long train of sentiments, which this would naturally lead me into. I will not set you a bad example, nor stagger your fortitude with a narrative of my weakness: preserve your reason in its full force; enjoy the greatness of soul you are possessed of; while I, on my side, shall seek consolation and assistance from the tenderness and affection of mine. I was yesterday at St. Germain: the queen made the first advances to me, and I made my court, as usual, at your expence. We had all the affair of your lying-in over; and then talked about my journey to Provence, not forgetting the late one to Britany; and how lucky mad. de Chaulnes had been in meeting me there. I should have told you, that that lady went to St. Germain with me. As for Monsieur, he drew me aside to a window, to talk to me about you, and ordered me very seriously to make his compliments to you, and let you know how glad he was to hear of your being safely brought to bed: he said so many obliging things on the subject, and in so peculiar a manner, that it must have been my own fault, if I did not understand, that he was desirous of attaching himself to your service; for they say he is grown weary of worshipping *the angel*. I found Madame much better than I expected. I could not see M.

de Montausier, he was closeted with Monseigneur. I should never have done repeating all the compliments that were made both to you and me; but they are all lost in the air. I was quite happy to get home. But whom do you think I found there? The presidents Reauville and Galiffet; and whom should they be talking of but madame de Grignan!

Your little girl is coming here: you say she serves to put me sometimes in mind of you; I know what answer you expect, that there is no occasion for that. I am going out in the coach. "Whither?" say you: to madame de Valavoire's. "What to do there?" To talk of Provence. "Observe that good woman," said Coulanges the other day, "she is for ever in company with her daughter."

I have received yours of the 30th of last month. Indeed, my dear, you displease me greatly in talking of your charming letters in the manner you do. What pleasure can you take in finding fault with your manner and style, and comparing yourself to the princess d'Harcourt? I cannot conceive where you got this false and injurious humility: it is wounding my heart, offending justice, and doing injury to truth. What depravity of manners! For heaven's sake leave off this practice, and see things as they really are: you will then have nothing to do but to guard against vanity, an affair that may be settled between your confessor and you. I am distracted at the thoughts of your being so thin. What is become of the time when you would eat only the head of a snipe, or the wing of a lark, in a day, for fear of growing too fat? If you should be with child again, be assured it is all over with you; you will be lost beyond hope.

We were talking of you yesterday at mad. de Coulanges's, when mad. Scarron reminded us with how much

wit and spirit you supported a bad cause once in the same place, and on the very carpet we were then sitting upon. There were mad. de la Fayette, mad. Scarron *, Segrais, Caderousse, the abbé Têtu, Guilleragues, and Brancas. You and your merit are never forgotten; your friends preserve the most lively remembrance of both; but, when I come to reflect where you are, though I know you are a little queen, yet how can I forbear sighing? We sigh too at the life we lead at St. Germain and Lere; so that we are for ever sighing. You know, I suppose, that Lauzun, as he was going into the place of his confinement, repeated, *In sæcula sæculorum*: I fancy there are some here that would gladly answer, *Amen*; and others again be as ready to cry out, No. Indeed, when he was jealous of your *neighbour* †, he used her very ill; and how did he serve many others?

Your little girl is very pretty: the sound of her voice goes to my very heart: she has a thousand little engaging ways, which amuse me, and make me love her; but I never can conceive it possible for her to equal you in my affections.

LETTER CLXVIII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Wednesday, Jan. 18, 1672.

For Heaven's sake, my dear child, what do you mean? What pleasure can you take in thus abusing your person and understanding, vilifying your conduct, and saying, that one must have great good-nature to think of you sometimes? Though I am certain you cannot

* Frances d'Aubigné, afterwards marchioness de Maintenon.

† See Letter 160.

believe all you say, yet it hurts me to hear it: you really make me angry with you; and though, perhaps, I ought not to answer seriously things that are only said in jest, yet I cannot help scolding you before I go any farther. You are excellent again, when you say you are afraid of wits. Alas! if you knew how insignificant they are when you are by, and how encumbered they are with their own dear persons, you would not value them at all. Do you remember how you used to be deceived in them sometimes? Do not let distance magnify objects too much; but it is one of its common effects.

We sup every evening at madame Scarron's; she has a most engaging wit, and an understanding surprisingly just and clear. It is a pleasure to hear her sometimes reason upon the horrid confusion and distractions of a country with which she is very well acquainted. The vexations that Beaudicourt undergoes in a place that appears so dazzling and glorious; the continual rage of Lauzun; the gloomy chagrin and cares of the court ladies, from which the most envied are not always exempt; are things which she describes in the most agreeable and entertaining manner. Such conversations as these lead us insensibly from one moral reflection to another, sometimes of a religious, sometimes of a political kind. You are frequently one of our subjects: she admires your wit and manners; and, whenever you return hither, you are sure of being highly in favour.

But let me give you an instance of the king's goodness and generosity, to show you what a pleasure it is to serve so amiable a master: He sent for marshal Bellefond into his closet the other day, and thus accosted him: "Monsieur le maréchal, I insist upon knowing your reasons for quitting my service. Is it through a principle of devotion? Is it from an inclination to retire? Or is it on account of your debts? If it be the latter,

I myself will take charge of them, and inform myself of the state of your affairs." The marshal was sensibly affected with this goodness: "Sire," said he, "it is my debts; I am overwhelmed with them, and cannot bear to see some of my friends, who assisted me with their fortunes, likely to suffer on my account, without having it in my power to satisfy them." "Well then," said the king, "they shall have security for what is owing to them: I now give you a hundred thousand francs on your house at Versailles, and a grant of four hundred thousand more, as a security in case of your death. The hundred thousand francs will enable you to pay off the arrears, and so now you remain in my service." That heart must be insensible indeed, that could refuse the most implicit obedience to such a master, who enters with so much goodness and condescension into the interest of his servants. Accordingly the marshal made no farther resistance: he is now reinstated in his place, and loaded with favours. This is all strictly true.

Not a night passes at St. Germain's without balls, plays, or masquerades. The king shows an assiduity to divert this Madame, that he never did for the other. Racine has brought out a new piece called Bajazet, which they say carries every thing before it: indeed it does not go *in emperando*, as the others did. Monsieur de Tallard says, that it as much exceeds the best piece of Corneille's, as Corneille's does one of Boyer's; this now is what you may call praising by the lump: there is nothing like telling truth: however, our eyes and ears will inform us more fully; for

Du bruit de Bajazet mon ame importunée *

obliges me to go immediately to the play; we shall see what it is.

* A line in Despreaux.

I have been at Livri: ah, my dear child, how well did I keep my word with you, and how many tender thoughts of you filled my breast! It was delightful weather, though very cold; but the sun shone finely, and every tree was hung with pearls and crystals, that formed a pleasing diversity of colours. I walked a great deal; the next day I dined at Pomponne: it would not be an easy matter to recount all that passed during a stay of five hours: however, I was not at all tired with my visit. Monsieur de Pomponne will be here in three or four days: I should be very much vexed, if I was obliged to apply to him about your Provence affairs; I am persuaded he will not hear me: you see I give myself airs of knowledge. But really nothing comes up to M. d'Usèz; I never saw a man of better understanding, nor one more capable of giving sound advice: I wait to see him, that I may inform you of what he has done at St. Germain.

You desire me to write you long letters; I think you have now sufficient reason to be contented: I am sometimes frightened at the length of them myself; and were it not for your agreeable flattery, I should never think of venturing them out of my hands. Madame de Brissac is excellently provided for the winter, in M. de Longueville and the count de Guiche; but nothing is meant but what is fair and honourable, only she takes a pleasure in being adored. La Marans is never seen now, either at madame de la Fayette's or at M. de la Rochefoucault's: we cannot find out what she is doing; we are apt to judge a little rashly now and then: she took it into her head this summer, that she should be ravished, as if she wished it; but I am of opinion, that she is in no great danger. Good Heavens, what a mad creature it is, and how long have I looked on her in the same light, as you do now! But now let me tell

you, my dear, it is not my fault that I do not see madame de la Valavoire *. I am sure there is no occasion to bid me go and see her, it is enough that she has seen you, for me to run after her; but then she is running after somebody else: for I might for ever desire her to wait at home for me; I cannot get her to do me that favour. Your jest applies admirably to M. le Grand, and a very good one it is. Poor Châtillon is every day teasing us with the most wretched ones imaginable.

LETTER CLXIX.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday evening, Jan. 15, 1672.

I WROTE to you this morning, my dear child, by the courier, who brings you the most pleasing and agreeable tidings about your Provence affairs; but I shall write to you again to-night, that it may not be said that the post came in without letters from me. I do really believe that you love me; you tell me so at least, and what end can you have in deceiving yourself and me too? And if you do not love me, you would be greatly to be pitied in being thus overwhelmed with such a number of my letters: yours constitute the happiness of my life. I shall say nothing to you about the *fine soul;* it was Langlade who made use of the expression, by way of joke; but in earnest, you have a fine soul: it is not perhaps one of those first-rate souls, like that of *What's his name* †, the Roman, who, rather than forfeit

* A lady of quality in Provence, who was just then come to Paris.

† Monsieur de Sauvebœuf, giving an account one day to the king's brother of a negotiation in which he had been employed at the court of Spain, said to him, *What's his name, What's his name,* the king of Spain said to me, &c.

his word, returned back to the Carthaginians, though he was well assured they would instantly put him to death; but next to him I think you may challenge a place with the foremost.

We have been to see the new piece of Racine's, and thought it admirable. My *daughter-in-law** is in my opinion the best performer I ever saw: she is infinitely before Desœillets; as for me, though I am thought to have some portion of talent for the stage, I am not fit to snuff the candles when she appears. She is ugly, when you come near her; I do not therefore wonder my son's passion was damped by her presence: but when she speaks verse, she is really adorable. Bajazet is altogether a fine performance; the distress rises towards the end, and the passions are very strong, and not of so extravagant a kind as in Berenice; yet I cannot think it surpasses his Andromache. As for the delightful plays of Corneille, they as much surpass this piece as your idea surpassed ..... Make the application, and remember that instance of folly; but be assured, that nothing will ever equal (I do not say surpass, but equal) the enchanting passages we meet with in Corneille. He read us the other day, at M. de la Rochefoucault's, a piece of his, which showed what he once had been: I wish you had been with me that afternoon; I am sure you would not have thought your time ill spent: you would have dropped a tear or two, for I myself shed twenty; besides, you would have greatly admired your *sister-in-law:* you would have had *the angels* before your eyes, and La Bourdeaux dressed out like a little miss. The duke was behind the scenes,

* Meaning La Champmêlée, the actress, with whom her son, the marquis de Sévigné, had been in love. It is said, that she possessed no share of any natural genius, but that Racine, who was likewise in love with her, had taught her to pronounce verse mechanically.

and Pomenars above with the footmen, wrapt up in his cloak, for fear of the count de Créance, who is resolved to have him hanged, whether he will or not. The *beaux* were all upon the stage; the marquis de Villeroi was in a masquerade-dress; the count de Guiche braced up like his own spirit; and all the rest looked like so many banditti. I have met the count twice at M. de la Rochefoucault's, and always thought he had a great deal of wit: he appeared then, indeed, less on the reserve than he usually does. Our abbé here sends you word, that he has received the plan of Grignan, which he likes extremely, and takes a walk in it now and then by way of anticipation: he wishes he had a side-view of the house; for my part, I shall content myself till I am altogether in possession of it, by being there. I have a thousand compliments for you from every one who has heard of the obliging manner in which the king spoke of M. de Grignan; madame de Vernueil was the first who came to me, she has been like to die. Farewell, my child; what shall I say of my love for you, and the interest I feel in all that concerns you? I embrace the *admirable* Grignan, the *prudent* coadjutor, and the *presumptuous* Adhémar: was it not thus I styled them the other day?

LETTER CLXX.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Wednesday, Jan. 20, 1672.

I SEND you M. de la Rochefoucault's Maxims, revised and corrected, with additions; it is a present to you from himself. Some of them I can make shift to guess the meaning of; but there are others that, to my shame be it spoken, I cannot understand at all. God knows how

it will be with you. There is a dispute between the archbishop of Paris and the archbishop of Rheims about a point of ceremony: Paris will have Rheims ask leave of him, as his superior, to officiate, which Rheims will not consent to. It is said, that these two right reverends will never agree till they are thirty or forty leagues asunder; if that is the case, they are both of them likely to continue as they are. The ceremony it relates to is the canonisation of one Borgia a Jesuit. The whole opera band is to exert itself on the occasion; the streets will be illuminated even to the Rüe St. Antoine; the people are all mad about it: old Mérinville, however, has died without having seen it.

Do not deceive yourself, my child, by entertaining too good an opinion of my letters. The other day an impertinent fellow, seeing the monstrous length of a letter I was writing to you, asked me very seriously, if I thought any body could possibly read it all: I trembled at the thought of it, but without any intention of amendment; for the correspondence I have with you is my existence, the sole pleasure of my life; and every other consideration is but mean, when put in competition with it. I am uneasy about your brother: poor fellow! The weather is very cold: he lies in camp, and is still on the march to Cologne, for the Lord knows how long! I was in hopes of seeing him this winter, and see where he is now! After all, I find little mademoiselle Adhémar must be the comfort of my old age: I wish you could but see how fond she is of me; how she cries after me, and hangs about me. She is not a beauty, but she is very pleasing, has a delightful voice, and a skin as clear and white .... In short, I doat on her. You, it seems, doat on your boy; I am very glad of it: we cannot have too many things to amuse us; real or imaginary, it does not signify.

To-morrow there is to be a ball at Madame's. I saw a heap of jewels tossing about at Mademoiselle's, which put me in mind of past troubles: and yet would to Heaven we were at the same work again! For how can I be unhappy while you are with me? Alas! my whole life is one continued scene of sorrow and disappointment. Dear monsieur Nicole! have pity on me; and teach me to bear, with patience, the dispensations of Providence. Farewell, my dearest child, I dare not say I adore you; but I cannot conceive any degree of love superior to mine: the kind and pleasing assurances you give me of yours, at once lighten and increase my sorrows.

LETTER CLXXI.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, Jan. 22, 1672, at 10 at night.

I HAVE but just been able, my child, to leave mademoiselle Adhémar's bed-side to write to you. If you would not be jealous, I know not what I could not say to you of this sweet child: it is the most amiable little creature that ever was seen; she is so lively, so brisk, and has such a number of little engaging ways, that no one can help being quite delighted with her. I have been at Mademoiselle's to-day, who sent for me to come to her; Monsieur came in while I was there, and immediately began talking of you: he said, there was nobody capable of filling your place at the ball; and very obligingly added, that, nevertheless, your absence ought to be no hinderance to my going thither: this is just the thing I wanted. There was a good deal of talk about the war; it seems a determined thing. We are in ex-

pectation of the queen of Spain's * answer; but let her say what she will, it is resolved, I find, that we must come to blows: if she declares for us, we fall upon the Dutch; if she takes the other side, then we shall seize on Flanders; and when once the uproar is begun, it will not be easily quieted. All this while our troops are upon their march towards Cologne. They say M. de Luxembourg is to open the scene. There are some commotions in Germany.

I have had a good deal of conversation with M. d'Usèz: our abbé mentioned to him in a very pretty way, what he intended for the abbé Grignan; this affair, however, must be kept secret; it all depends on M. d'Usèz, for it is through him only that we can obtain the proper requisites from his majesty. I was told at my first coming in, that the chevalier de Grignan † has the small-pox at M. d'Usèz's house: this will be an unlucky accident for him, a great vexation to all who are his friends, and the occasion of infinite trouble to M. d'Usèz, as it will entirely hinder him from acting in the present emergency. This is all of a piece with my usual ill fortune. You are continually praising me for my letters, and yet I dare not commend yours, lest it should look like giving praise for praise; however, I must not lay myself so far under restraint as to conceal the truth. Your thoughts and periods are many of them incomparable in their kind, and your style is altogether as perfect as one could wish; d'Hacqueville and I were quite charmed at some brilliant passages we

* Anna Maria of Austria, relict of Philip II. of Spain, and mother to Charles II. who was not declared of age till the year 1672: his dominions being, in the mean while, governed by the queen-mother, assisted by six counsellors of the deceased king's nomination.

† Charles Philip Adhémar de Monteil, chevalier or knight of Malta, grand-nephew to James Adhémar de Monteil, bishop of Usèz.

observed in them: nor are you less excellent in your narrations; the passage relating to the king, your resentment against Lauzun and the bishop, are each of them master-pieces in their way: sometimes I show a few of them to madame de Villars; but she generally fixes on the most tender parts, which presently bring tears into her eyes. Do not be afraid of my showing your letters improperly; I know who are worthy of that confidence, and what may be told and what concealed. Listen, my dear, to an act of goodness and benevolence of your royal master's; it will serve to redouble your zeal for his service. I am told from very good authority, that the other day M. de Montausier * applied to the king for a small abbey for one of his friends, which was refused him; upon which he flung out of the presence in great discontent, and was heard to say, as he went out, *none but ministers and mistresses had any interest in this country*. These words were not quite proper; they were presently carried to the king's ears, who sent for Montausier, and gently reprimanded him for his heat, putting him in mind of the little reason he had to complain; and the next day appointed madame de Crussol †, *dame du palais*. Let me tell you, this is the conduct of a Titus. You may judge whether the governor was not greatly confounded, as well as the bishop, who is indebted to you for his deputation: these are the most cruel methods of revenge. The king has reconciled the two archbishops of Paris and Rheims. What shall I tell you next? My poor aunt is afflicted with severe pain; this gives me great concern, and lays me under the indispensable necessity of attending her.

* Charles de Sainte Maure, duke of Montausier, governor to Louis dauphin of France, and only son of Louis XIV.

† Mary Julia de St. Maure, wife to Emmanuel de Crussol, duke of Usèz, and daughter to M. de Montausier.

LETTER * CLXXII.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO THE COUNT DE BUSSY.

Paris, January 24, 1672.

It is very odd, my dear cousin, that the desire of writing to you should seize me all at once, in the chamber of our little sister of Sainte-Marie. It would seem as if our friendship were founded upon the sanctity of our grand-mother. What else can I think, when I find that so many places where I have seen you, bring you less to my mind than this, where I never beheld you in my life. You have a daughter here who contributes to the miracle. She is no more of a fool than if she saw you every day, and is as wise as if she had never been out of the walls of Sainte-Marie. She is a rigid Christian, but she has certain charms of the Rabutins that render her perfectly fascinating. I doubt whether any one of your children surpasses this: but I shall make you vain. I was for eight months in Britany, during which I never felt as if I had wit enough to write to you. It was my intention to renew the correspondence on my return, and I begin here. The better day, the better deed. I shall tell you no news, and shall say nothing of what is expected. You know every thing that passes; at least, I am willing to believe so; for I do not think it is quite safe to write to you upon certain subjects. There are some new comedies acting, of which I have the vanity to think your opinion will be the same as mine. Adieu, my dear cousin; you cannot imagine how much I merit the honour of your friendship.

LETTER *CLXXIII.

FROM THE COUNT DE BUSSY TO MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Chaseu, January 28, 1672.

Would you know, madam, what influenced you to write to me from Sainte-Marie, where you never saw me, rather than from a thousand places where you have seen me a thousand times? I will tell you. It was my daughter that brought me to your remembrance; and being soon weary of the subjects that are discussed in a convent, you employed a part of the time of your visit to write to her father; from which I infer, that you had rather hold communion with the world than with me, but that you had rather hold communion with me than with God. If you are not a hypocrite you will acknowledge this. When I came to that part of your letter, where you say, that my daughter is no more of a fool than if she saw me every day, and that she is as wise as if she had never left the walls of Sainte-Marie, I interpreted it, as wise as if she had never seen me. In reality, my society might contribute to render a young person agreeable, but it would not easily convert her into a nun. My daughter is a very good one, I am told by many persons besides yourself; and the testimony you bear to the charms of her mind, is what I call passing the ordeal. Her sisters have also their share of merit; and if my misfortune has been the means of depriving them of the advantages of affluence, it has been made up to them by habits of temperance and a good education. You ought to have written to me from Britany: we have both lost by it. You laugh at me in saying you had not wit enough. Are you obliged then to study to write good letters to me? They

would lose, I think, that character, if they were so written.

LETTER CLXXIV.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO MADAME DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Wednesday, Jan. 27, 1672.

NEVER did I see any thing more charming than your letters; you declare yourself fully satisfied with the love and esteem I bear you, and express yourself in a manner that must fill a heart like mine with the warmest tenderness. You seem well acquainted with all that passes in it, and rightly perceive that most of my actions have for their object the being, in some measure, serviceable to you: you have put the true signification on my journey to Pomponne, as well as on the visits I made to M. le Camus: trust me, my dearest child, you are not at all mistaken; and while your sagacity and penetration do me such good offices with your heart, I have no reason to apprehend a diminution in your affection for me. I cannot but admire the sweetness of your temper; it is even beyond what my most sanguine hopes could have formed: if at any time it should appear to be otherwise, it should be forgiven for the sake of what it really is; and for the same reason should we forgive those to whom you do not show yourself sufficiently for them to discover all the good qualities you are possessed of, and who, not being used to you or to them, are apt to take you only by your words. But, my dear child, I am quite concerned at your being so extremely indolent, as not even to entertain a thought of moving from where you are; indeed it vexes me: I think M. de Grignan much more reasonable in the

thoughts he had about marshal Bellefond's place, if he had resigned: what he proposed in that case was quite to my mind; but you saw how that affair turned out. I could wish that you would not lay aside all desire of coming nearer to us, if occasion should offer; for M. d'Usèz might, with a very good face, represent to his majesty, how impossible it is not to be uneasy at being obliged to serve him at such a distance from his person, after having spent the greatest part of his life about him, as M. de Grignan has done.

M. de Berni, the other day at Versailles, mistook a window for a door, and fell from the first floor upon a little boy, who was very much hurt, and prevented his being killed. Timely assistance was given; and though his head is broken, it is thought he will do well. This comes from having windows to the floor: they should always have a wire-guard before them. This accident has made a great noise at Versailles.

I desire, my dear, that you will frequently mention my aunt in your letters; it will be some comfort to her in her tortures. I have sent your letters as directed; that to madame de la Fayette is extremely pretty. There was something very strange in the beginning of your last; you bid me guess what you had done the night before. I trembled from head to foot, and gave all over for lost; at last it proved to be, that you had sate up waiting for the courier that was to bring your letters, and had very joyously been drinking your royal master's health: this gave me breath again, and I applaud you for your zeal; for, in truth, it is impossible to praise the king too much: he is, if possible, grown more perfect within this last year. The court poets have already begun at court; for my part, I like prose as well, since every one can use it, to speak and sing his praise,

I have been writing a long letter to M. de Pomponne, relative to affairs in Provence, as M. d'Usèz cannot see him to talk with him, on account of the poor chevalier's having the small-pox: I dare not tell you in what a a condition he is: his youth gives us some hopes; but I have had many uneasy moments on his account. The countess de Fiesque's daughter, madame de Guerchi, died lately in the country of a fright she got by a fire: she was eight months gone; she miscarried, and died shortly after. It shocks one to hear of such accidents. The young duke de Rohan is at the point of death, of a violent fever he got with swallowing two glasses of brandy, after drinking too freely of wine. It is the seventh day of his disorder, and he is now judged to be past hopes of recovery. A fine prospect this for M. and madame de Soubise: for my part, after what I saw of him at our assembly, and the manner in which I knew he treated madame de Rohan, I am quite easy about the matter. The chancellor *(Seguier)* is dying: he has sent the seals to the king by the duke de Coislin: a fine present indeed! Good God! my dear, how do I wish for M. de Grignan to have some handsome place here about his master's person, and let your Provençals go whistle! Adhémar will make me hate them all heartily: it would be well to let them know what he thinks of them. Adieu, my dearest child, I think of nothing but coming to see you. I embrace my dear Grignan and his dearer wife.

LETTER CLXXV.

TO THE SAME.

From the Convent of St. Mary in the Fauxbourg, Friday, January 29, 1672, being the day of St. Francis de Sales, and that on which you were married: this is my first rhapsody; for I make a *tout de l'an* * of every thing.

HERE I am, my dear child, in the very place, where, of all places in the world, I wept the most violently and bitterly, on the cruel day in which you were separated from me: I tremble still, whenever I think of it. I have been walking a full hour in the garden, while the sisters are at vespers, stunned with the most horrid music, from which I thought it wise to escape. My dear child, I can no longer support this: my remembrance of you destroys me on every occasion: I thought I should have died in this garden, where I have so often seen you: I will not tell you the situation I am in: your rigid virtue is a stranger to the weakness of the human heart. There are certain days, hours, and moments, in which I am no longer mistress of myself: I know my weakness, and do not pretend to a fortitude of which I am not possessed. Thus it is with me; I am quite exhausted with grief; and, to complete my misery, a man whom I had sent to the chevalier de Grignan, is just returned, with intelligence that in no degree helps to dry my tears. I imagine he has bequeathed in your favour whatever he had to give. Keep it, I

* *Bout-de-l'an*, a service in the Romish church that is read for a deceased person at the year's end after his death. By this madame de Sévigné means to say, that she is always recollecting some subject of grief or concern.

desire you, however trifling it may be, as a mark of the esteem he had for you; and do not dispose of it as I know your generous nature would lead you to do; for there is not one of your brothers-in-law, who is not richer in proportion than you are. I cannot express to you the concern this loss has given me. What! shall such a little viper as M. de Rohan be snatched from the jaws of death, and this amiable youth, whose birth, person, temper, and honest heart, can make his loss desirable or serviceable to no one, be thus lost to us! Had I been free to follow my own inclinations, I would never have left him: his disorder would have given me no apprehensions on my own account: but I cannot act in this respect as I would. You will have letters by the post, written subsequent to this, which will give you a more circumstantial account of his disorder: it is enough for me to feel it as I do.

It is reported that the chancellor is dead. I cannot tell whether the seals will be disposed of before the post goes out. The countess *(de Fiesque)* is in great affliction for the loss of her daughter: she is at St. Mary's of St. Denis. My dear child, women cannot take too much care of themselves, both during pregnancy and lying-in, nor guard too much against being in either of those situations: I mention no names. Adieu, my dearest; this will be a short letter: I cannot write in my present frame of mind, and you have no need of my dullness; but, when it so happens that you receive a letter of an unreasonable length, thank yourself for it, and the manner in which you flatter me on the pleasure my long letters give you: you cannot now complain of them. I embrace you a thousand and a thousand times; and so return to my garden, and then to church for a little while, and then to visit the sick, who are as full of sorrow and vexation as myself.

Here is sister Magdalen Agnes coming in, who salutes you in the name of the Lord.

LETTER CLXXVI.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Wednesday, Feb. 8, 1672.

I HAD a whole hour's conversation yesterday, with M. de Pomponne. It would take more paper than I have by me, to tell you the joy we had in seeing each other again, and how many subjects we passed over for want of time to discuss them in. In short, I found him the same as ever; he is all perfection, and sets a much greater value on me than I deserve: his father has given him to understand, that he cannot more sensibly oblige *him*, than by doing every thing in his power to oblige *me*; though he says there are a thousand other reasons which would have induced him to do it, especially the consideration of my having the whole government of Provence in my hands: this is an admirable pretext for our having frequent business together. This was the only subject that had its full scope. I had an opportunity of talking to him at large about the bishop: he knows very well how to give attention to others, as well as to speak himself: he very readily gave credit to the description I drew of that prelate's manners, and did not seem very well pleased, that a man of his profession should take upon him the governor. I think I suffered nothing to escape that was proper to be said on the occasion. He always inspires me with wit: his own is so perfectly easy and unconstrained, that we are insensibly led to repose an entire confidence in him, and to speak our mind in the most happy terms. How many do I know that are quite the reverse of this! In

short, my dear child, without fishing for any more compliments, of which you are so very prodigal, I quitted him, full of joy at the thoughts of the service this connexion may be to you hereafter. We agreed to write to each other. He seems fond of my unstudied and simple style, though his own is that of eloquence itself.

I sent you melancholy news of the poor chevalier in my last; I have just received more of the same kind: he is alive still, but has received extreme unction, and continues as ill as possible: the pustules dry up as soon as they appear. It is, in my opinion, the same sort as mad. de St. Simon's. Ripert will tell you more of it than I can: I hear from him every day, and am in great uneasiness about him, for I find I love him more than I thought I did. The princess of Conti * was seized this evening with a fit of an apoplexy: she is not dead yet; but remains insensible and speechless: they are torturing her a thousand ways to bring her to herself: there are a hundred persons in her room, and three hundred in the house: there is weeping, and wailing, and great outcry: that is all I know of the matter at present. As to the chancellor †, he is certainly dead, and made a truly noble exit; his bright understanding, his prodigious memory, his natural eloquence, and eminent piety, retained their full lustre to the very moment of his dissolution. The simile of the torch, that shines brightest when nearest being extinguished, is verified in him. Mascaron ‡ was with him in his last moments, and was astonished at the answers he made, and the number of quotations he drew from

* Anna-Maria Martinozzi, princess of Conti, died 4th Feb. 1672.

† Peter Seguier, who died the 28th of January, 1672.

‡ Julius Mascaron of the Oratory, a very celebrated preacher; he was afterwards made bishop of Tulle, and from thence translated, in 1679, to the bishopric of Agen.

the holy Scriptures; he paraphrased the *Miserere*, and drew tears from the eyes of all the by-standers: he quoted passages from the Scriptures, and the writings of the fathers, with greater readiness than any of the bishops could have done that attended him. In short, his death was one of the most glorious and extraordinary things imaginable; and what makes it still more so, is his leaving but very little wealth behind him; he was as rich the day he entered into employment, as that on which he died: it is true, he provided for his family; but that was not providing for himself: in short, he has left no more than 70,000 livres a year; and what is that for a man who had been forty years chancellor, and had besides a handsome fortune of his own? Death discovers many things. I did not learn what I tell you from any of his own family. They are much visited. Mad. de Coulanges and I held our ranks there. Mad. de Vernueil * is so ill, that she sees nobody. It is not yet known who will have the seals.

I desire you will put the coadjutor in mind of answering M. d'Agen † on the affair he wrote to him about; I am plagued to death upon the subject. It is very wrong to be regardless of a bishop of such repute. I always put off writing to this same coadjutor from day to day: I think I am infected with his irregularities: I find fault with him, and, at the same time, sin myself. I embrace M. de Grignan: does he still talk of thrushes? There was a lady the other day, who, instead of making use of the old saying, *As full as a thrush*, said madame la Presidente was *As deaf as thrush:* it made us all laugh. Farewell, my dearest child, your little girl.

* Madame de Vernueil was daughter to the chancellor Seguier.

† Claude Joli, bishop of Agen: he had been curate of St. Nicolas des Champs at Paris.

is a sweet creature: she amuses me greatly, and grows handsomer and handsomer every day.

LETTER CLXXVII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, Feb. 5, 1672. This day thousand years I was married.

I was told this morning, that the chevalier was certainly better: I have great hopes from his youth: pray Heaven restore him to our wishes. As to the princess of Conti, she died about seven or eight hours after I had made up my packet; that is, yesterday about four o'clock in the morning, without recovering her senses for an instant, or uttering a single intelligible word. She now and then called for Cecile, one of her women, and ejaculated, "My God!" They were in hopes her senses were returning, but she said no more; and expired with a shriek, and with such violent convulsions, that she left the marks of her fingers in the arm of the woman who held her. No words can describe the desolation and horror that prevailed in her apartment. The duke, the princes of Conti, madame de Longueville, madame de Gamache, all wept as if their hearts would break. Madame de Gesvres had recourse to fainting, and madame de Brissac roared as loud as she could, and threw herself upon the floor. In short, the attendants were obliged to send them out of the room, for they did not know what they did; they rather over-acted their parts: somebody says, those who strive to prove too much, prove nothing. However, there was a general grief. The king seemed a good deal affected, and made her panegyric, by saying, that she was more considerable for her virtue, than the greatness of her birth and

station. By her will, she has left the education of her children to madame de Longueville. The prince is appointed their guardian. She has left 20,000 crowns to the poor, and as much among her servants: she has ordered her body to be interred in her own parish, and without the least pomp, like any other common person. I do not know whether all these little matters come *á propos* or not: but you will have me write long letters, and so you must bear with them, and take it for your pains. I saw this pious princess yesterday after she was laid out: she was greatly disfigured by the rough treatment she had received: her mouth was strangely mangled, two of her teeth were broken; and they had burnt her on the head: so that, in short, if people recover from a fit of the apoplexy, they must be miserable spectacles all the rest of their lives. Her death affords subject for a number of excellent reflections: it would have been a dreadful one to any other than herself; but to her it was the most happy that could be desired, since she felt nothing from it, and was besides always prepared. It has even affected Brancas.

I forgot to mention to you in my letter of the day before yesterday, that I met Canaples at Nôtre Dame, who, after a thousand compliments and good wishes for M. de Grignan and you, told me, that marshal Villeroi had assured him, that M. de Grignan's letters had been greatly admired in the council; that they had been read with pleasure, and that the king said, he never saw any thing better written. I promised him to let you know this. The lady, whose name I did not mention to you in my last, was mad. de Louvois. *A propos.* M. de Louvois took his seat at the council-table four days ago, as one of the king's ministers. His majesty is to sign to-morrow in the presence of six counsellors

of state, and our masters of the requests. No one knows how long this will last. This is a fine post for his majesty, and he will, I dare say, acquit himself very well in it. I have had a thousand extravagant thoughts in my head about the chancellor: I cannot think where I got them, in the condition I have been in for these two or three days past. The evening, the whole day, and the day following your departure from hence last year, have run so strongly in my head, and so affected my mind and spirits, that I cannot keep the tears from my eyes; and yet nothing can be more silly than to grieve for a thing that it is out of our power to remedy: it is destroying ourselves to no purpose, and is just as ridiculous as forming wishes, and building castles in the air. You have too much good sense to waste your time in such trifles; but they please me. I am charmed, my dearest child, to find you take such pleasure in my letters, though I cannot think them so entertaining as you say they are. I have sent you four reams of paper, you know on what conditions: I hope to have the greatest part of it back again between this and Easter; after that, I shall aspire to more substantial joys.

LETTER CLXXVIII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Wednesday, Feb. 10, 1672.

At length, my dear child, after a multitude of false alarms and vain hopes, we have lost the poor chevalier. I must confess to you, that I have been greatly affected at the death of this excellent young man; it took place on Saturday the 6th Feb. at four in the morning. If a truly Christian end can administer comfort to Christians,

we have the greatest reason for consolation in the assurance of his being happy. Never did any one show more resignation, piety, or grace: he would not have accepted life, had it been in the power of any one to have ensured it him. So great was his confidence in the mercies of his God, that there is the greatest reason to believe, that he felt such a disposition of soul, as he would not willingly have hazarded on any account. He lost a great deal of blood: and was very much against being bled the last time, which was the eleventh; but the physicians overruled him; and he told them, that, since it must be so, he submitted, but saw they were resolved to kill him in form. The death of M. de Guise, which was supposed to have happened from not being bled, has occasioned the loss of many lives since. The poor youth was ill ever since his journey to St. Germain: he was seized with a violent vomiting and laxativeness at his first going into waiting, and took something to stop it, which had the desired effect; but, in about a week after, as he was returning to Paris, he was seized with a fever and the small-pox, which covered him so completely, and was so offensive, that those who attended him could scarcely stay in the chamber. Thus did Providence see fit to cut short his life in the very flower of his age. This is a melancholy detail; but when we are truly affected, we do not strive to conceal it by pretended ignorance. I ought not to introduce any other subject in this letter. However, when you have dried your tears a little, you may read what follows, and you will learn what resolution we have taken with regard to your affairs.

We did not receive the letter you sent us by the courier till yesterday: it was this I was so much distressed about; but now there are none lost. I was near an hour with the bishop of Usèz. The abbé was with

me. We had a good deal of conversation together; and I am more than ever satisfied with the prudence and good sense of this prelate: you have nothing to do but send him the first thoughts that come into your head, and an hour or two's reflection will be sufficient for him to see all that is proper to be done or left undone. I showed him the letter I had received from M. Pomponne: I must manage so as to bring about a conversation between M. d'Usèz and him. The very name of poor M. d'Usèz is pestilential * at present: he dares not appear at court, nor can he get to speak with M. Colbert: this ruins us. It is his opinion, that we should not be too hasty in the affair you wrote to him about; because, if it really belongs to the deputies, we should not give them all the right of the question, and keep the wrong to ourselves; for, as they do not want for cunning, they will be sure to make the most of every favourable circumstance, and take care to conceal the rest. When people who are in the wrong happen to have some little matter of fact on their side, they turn and wind it a thousand ways, till they become perfectly insupportable. And it is in this you will find the good bishop's prudence of the greatest service to you.

The marquis de Villeroi † has received orders to retire from court, on account of his ill conduct. This is all the king said about it. The affair is variously talked of, and several people are blamed for it. One thing certain is, that Vardes ‡ will not be much displeased at it. Lyons is the place of his exile, which will not be very disagreeable to him, provided it does not continue

* On account of the small-pox having been in his house.

† The last maréchal of that name.

‡ It was the marquis de Villeroi that occasioned the rupture between the countess de Scissons and M. de Vardes.

too long. I am so well convinced of the concern you have for the poor chevalier, that I shall reserve for some other time a thousand little trifles, which would be quite out of season at present.

Your maxim is a divine one: M. de la Rochefoucault is jealous, and cannot but think he made it himself. The words are very happily arranged; but how comes it that you did not understand his? Alas! is there any living without folly, that is to say, without whims? and is not that man completely foolish, who thinks to show his wisdom by debarring himself of all amusement and diversion? You will be of our opinion, if you reflect.

The abbé has paid the last duties to the poor chevalier: I should have discharged mine; but they would have stoned me if I had gone near the house; and so I contented myself with going to weep with M. d'Usèz, who is in another house. I am very uneasy to hear of your being at Aix, on account of the small-pox having been there so lately. Heavens, what a sad thing it is to love so well! I can perceive even from hence, the tranquil, and peaceable situation your poor dear heart was in at Lambesc, where you indulged yourself on the bread and water of indolence: but now you are got back to your ragoûts again. There is nothing ridiculous in your comparison; it would make me laugh, indeed, if I was in a humour for laughing; but that is not the case at all times. Alas! my dear child, it is now above a year since I saw you: how deeply do I feel this long absence! and you, my dearest love! do you not feel it a little now and then?

FROM MONSIEUR DE COULANGES.

I SHALL not waste my time and yours, charming countess, in ill-timed compliments; but content myself with

assuring you, that no one can be more sincerely afflicted at the death of our poor chevalier than myself: I was so happy in his acquaintance while in Provence, and promised myself so much satisfaction in the continuance of it here and elsewhere, that his loss has affected me painfully. What a subject of meditation is here for young people, as well as for those in a more advanced age! There is no trusting to either youth or health; we are all alike mortal, but the day and hour no man knoweth. I shall conclude with this commonplace piece of morality, and at the same time request you, my charming countess, to permit me to embrace you with the most sincere and tender respect.

FROM MADAME DE COULANGES.

I AM greatly afflicted with the death of the chevalier de Grignan; but not to add to the trouble you are already in, by that of reading a miserable letter, I shall content myself, dear madam, with desiring you to be assured, that no one can be more interested in any event that is interesting to yourself; and that I derive the greatest pleasure from the hope of seeing you this summer: I am determined to go to Grignan, though I should be obliged to leave the marquis de Villeroi at Lyons; think of that. Adieu, dear madam: it is a delightful thing to live with madame de Sévigné.

LETTER CLXXIX.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, Feb. 12, 1672.

I CANNOT but be in great pain for you, my dear child, when I think on the concern the death of the poor

chevalier must have given you: you saw him very lately, and that is enough to make you love him, as it furnished you with an opportunity of knowing the many good qualities Heaven had endowed him with. It is certain, that no one could be better born, nor possess more just and desirable sentiments: he had, besides, a very pleasing style of countenance, and was extremely fond of you; all this could not fail of rendering him infinitely dear to you and to every one that knew him. I can easily judge of your grief, by my own; but shall endeavour to amuse you a little with some particulars relating to your own affairs, and with what passes in our world. I have had a long conversation with M. le Camus, who is so much in our interest, that he gives me his advice in several points: he is disgusted with any thing that looks like double-dealing; and, as his own conduct is so much the reverse, he the more easily enters into our views, which he knows to be founded in uprightness and sincerity: these should never be given up on any account; they will always be in fashion. The world may be deceived for a while; but knaves will be found out in the long-run, I am persuaded.

The marquis de Villeroi is actually set out for Lyons, as I told you. The king ordered marshal de Crequi to tell him to withdraw himself to some distance from the court; it is supposed on account of something he had said at the countess's *(de Soissons)*. In short, there are various conjectures. The king asked Monsieur, who was just returned from Paris, what was the favourite topic there? Monsieur replied, "The poor marquis." "And what about him?" said the king. "They say, that he is in disgrace for having spoken in behalf of an unfortunate person." "What unfortunate person?" said the king. "The chevalier de Lorraine," answered

Monsieur. "And do you still think of this chevalier de Lorraine?" said the king: "Have you really a regard for him? Should you be obliged to any one who would restore him to you?"—"It would," replied Monsieur, "be the greatest pleasure I ever experienced in my life." "Well then," said his majesty, "I will give you this pleasure; a courier has been dispatched to him two days ago; he will soon be here, and then I shall give him to you, and desire that you would look upon yourself as obliged to me for it the remainder of your life, and love and esteem him for my sake: I will do still more, he shall be appointed field-marshal in the army I am to command."—Upon this, Monsieur flung himself at the king's feet, and for a long time embraced his knees, and kissed his hand with inexpressible joy. His majesty raised him up, and said, "This is not the way for brothers to embrace;" and then embraced him in the most cordial and affectionate manner. Every word of this is true, it comes from the best authority; so you may make your own reflections, draw proper inferences, and redouble your present worthy dispositions for the service of your royal master. They say, that Madame* is certainly to go, and that several ladies of quality are to accompany her. Various sentiments prevail at Monsieur's: some have faces of an ell long, others are as much contracted with smiling; the chevalier de Beuvron's is, it seems, of an immeasurable length. Monsieur de Nouailles is to be recalled too, and serve as lieutenant-general, with M. de Schomberg, in the army to be commanded by Monsieur. The king told the maréchal Villeroi, that it was necessary to

*The princess Henrietta, sister of Charles II. of England, to whom she was then going over on a secret negociation. See Voltaire's Age of Lewis XIV. vol. II.

make his son do a little penance; but that the punishments of this life did not last for ever. You may depend upon the truth of all this. There is nothing I hate so much as false reports, and am as fond of those that are true: if you should not happen to have the same taste for them, you are undone; for you have them here out of number.

La Marans went to madame de Longueville's the other day alone, and in a deep mourning veil; she met with great slights from every one: Langlade has sent you word how he repaid her for the ridiculous speeches she made him some time ago, and that he wished you had been behind the door. Would to heaven you had! Madame de Brissac was at madame de Longueville's at the same time, and with all the appearance of the most excessive grief: but unluckily on the count de Guiche falling into conversation with her, she quite forgot her part, and was as much out as in the mad scene on the day of the princess's death *, where, just as she should have lost all knowledge, she quite forgot her cue, and took notice of every body that came in.

Farewell, my lovely child. Do you not think our separation long? It affects me in such a manner that it would be more than I could bear, were it not for the pleasure I take in loving you as I do, in spite of all the misery attending it.

* The princess de Conti. See the preceding letter.

LETTER CLXXX.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Wednesday, Feb. 17, 1672.

Monsieur de Coulanges and I have given a dinner to the president de Bouc; and M. and madame de Valavoire, the bishop of Usèz, and Adhémar, were of the party: but hear our misfortune. The president, after having promised to be with us, came to excuse himself, having urgent business at St. Germain. We thought we should have hanged ourselves; however, we did as well as we could. Madame de la Valavoire brought Buzanval with her; but the president was the chief object of our desire. The dinner was good, genteel, and magnificent. In short, it was an irreparable loss: Le Bouc may return perhaps; but the dinner will not. Adhémar was greatly afflicted to hear of his poor brother's death on his arrival; I received him with an aching heart: he slept at St. Germain, and promised to call upon me at his return, and have some talk about you. It is a conversation I long for. You say, that I weep for what I can prevent: indeed, my dear, I cannot help weeping sometimes; but I would not have you suppose, that I can set out when I please: I would gladly set out to-morrow; but then your brother is in great want of me at present; and I have other business which will detain me till Easter: therefore you see, my child, that one may have the inclination, yet not the power, to set out, and continue to weep.

I saw our cardinal de Retz very lately: he cannot be comforted for not finding you here. He is going to write to you. He appears to me really vexed to be at

Paris without seeing and chatting with his dear niece: you make him wish the pope were dead.

You will see the chevalier de Lorraine before we shall. Mons. de Boufflers *, madame du Plessis's son-in-law, dropped down dead as he was going out of one room into another, without any farther ceremony: I saw his widow a little while ago, who, I believe, will be quickly comforted. Monsieur Isarn, a great wit, has died too, much in the same manner.

I cannot help being uneasy at your being at Aix, while the air there is so full of the small-pox: let me recommend to you to avoid at least all crowds and public places: it is a most dreadful disorder. Your daughter has just such a complexion as madame de Villeroi had, a clear distinct red and white; fine blue eyes; black hair, an elegant turn of countenance, and a chin like wax-work; her lip grows less every day: she never cries, but is all gentleness and affection: she can speak five or six words already: in short, she is a lovely creature, and I love her dearly. Adhémar tells me wonders of your little boy. Madame de Guénegaud pressed me very much to make you and the coadjutor her compliments of condolence on the death of the chevalier, so hold her quit on that score.

I have just learned that Adhémar has had a glorious conversation with M. Colbert; he will tell you all about it. The other day as they were talking before the king about Languedoc, they spoke of Provence, which led to the mention of M. de Grignan; and a great deal was said in his favour: monsieur de Janson joined in the general opinion, and afterwards took occasion to mention his natural indolence of temper:

* Francis count of Boufflers, elder brother to the late duke of that name.

upon which the marquis de Charôt began, and answered in a high tone: "Sir, M. de Grignan is far from being indolent when his majesty's service is in question; and no one could have exerted himself more, or done better, than he did in the last assembly; this I know to be fact from good authority." These are the persons we may trust; they are sure to understand things properly. Every body concurred in his opinion. I shall mention the *Adoné* to honest Chapelain, he will be proud to know you remember him. I always deliver your compliments, and they are returned in the most affectionate manner. My aunt continues very ill. Your poor brother writes very frequently to me, and I to him. This war almost drives me mad, when I think of the danger he must run at the opening of the campaign. How thickly strewed with wormwood is the path of life! My dearest child, adieu; I embrace you.

FROM MONSIEUR DE COULANGES.

I say nothing; but I think the more. We shall be at Lyons, about Easter: madame de Coulanges and I are going there to see the marriage of mademoiselle du Gué *, who, without looking farther, has chosen M. de Bagnols, whom you know, and who is her first cousin. They have nothing to reproach each other with in point of birth; and as to fortune, Bagnols has a good five and twenty thousand livres a year, which is no bad thing, is it? I hope we shall be at Lyons to do the honours of the place to your mother, when she passes through it in her way to Provence. Adieu, fair countess; I love you still with the same unalterable affection. M. d'Adhémar told me, he had brought M. de Grignan's picture with him; but I have not yet seen it.

* Sister to madame de Coulanges.

LETTER CLXXXI.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, Feb. 19, 1672.

I SHALL go on Sunday to St. Germain with madame de Coulanges, to have a little conversation with M. de Pomponne; I think it quite necessary: I shall give you an exact account of what passes, that M. de Grignan may have more reason than ever to call me his little minister. Adhémar has already done wonders on his part; and M. d'Usèz no less on his: in a word, I do not think we are in any danger of being surprised, as we are already so well prepared. But what shall I say to you about the charming picture M. de Grignan has sent to M. de Coulanges? It is very beautiful, and a great likeness; that of Le Fevre is mere daubing to it. I have made a vow never to leave Provence till I have one like it, and another of you: there is no money I would so willingly lay out. But pray, my dear child, take care, and do not change for the worse. Poor madame de Guerchi died lately in consequence of being worn out with child-bearing. I cannot but reverence the husbands who get rid of their wives through excess of love and tenderness.

Guitaut and I have had a great deal of chat about a certain friend of ours (d'Hacqueville), remarkable for his prudence, and of whom he stands so much in awe: he dares not inform you of an accident which is reported to have happened to him, which is neither more nor less than his being passionately in love with the marshal's little one-eyed daughter. It is all darts and flames, I am told: he denies it as he would murder; but his actions betray him: he is sensible how ridicu-

lous it is to be in love with such a ridiculous object, and is as much ashamed and confounded as a man can well be; but, in short, the charming eye has smitten him:

> Cet œil si charmant qui n'eut jamais
> Son pareil en divins attraits *.

Poor Guitaut dares not inform you of this himself; I tell it you as a secret, and desire you not to betray it: but, in the mean time, who can help admiring the wonderful powers of the orvietan in this occasion? About two hours ago I saw M. de Gordes, M. d'Usèz, and Adhémar. I am quite in Provence. I had a good deal of chat with Adhémar, who assures me, that I am beloved by you, which is the greatest joy I can have in this world. I am delighted with your temper, your fortitude, your reason, and your conduct: in short, I cannot help saying to him:

> De grace montrez moins à mes sens desolés
> La grandeur de ma perte, et ce que vous valez †.

We never know when to have done talking of you: your friend madame de Vaudemont will soon be happy; I have this from the same hand as Adhémar: it is still a secret; but there is a set of obliging people in the world, who love to let one into a secret a day or two before the time, and others again are so very reserved, there is no living with them. What sweets can we taste in a friendship so loaded with thorns as this is? It is crushed, it is stifled in its birth. Guitaut and I had quite a dissertation upon this subject yesterday; and I

* That charming eye which never yet
Its match for heav'nly beauty met.

† Ah! cease to paint to my distracted senses the greatness of my loss, and of her worth.

came to a resolution never to form a friendship under such disguises. Adieu, my ever amiable. I am going to sup at M. de la Rochefoucault's, which obliges me to make my letter so short.

LETTER CLXXXII.

TO THE SAME.

Pari, Wednesday, Feb. 24, 1672.

I RECEIVED both your letters at once; I cannot hear of your being in such grief without finding my own renewed: I perceive that you are truly afflicted, and you have so much reason to be so, that I cannot say a word to you against it. I have felt all you now feel, and the death of the poor chevalier was not the first opportunity I took of expressing my sense of his numerous virtues: I pity you for having seen him last autumn, it is an addition to your grief: M. d'Usèz, will inform you of what the king said to him on the occasion, in which the whole family joined. He was much regretted by them, and the queen spoke of him to me with great kindness; but all this will not restore the excellent youth to us. You have so great a regard for all M. de Grignan's family, that I dare say you are as much afflicted at his death as M. de Grignan himself.

I dined to-day, in company with several Provençals, at M. de Valavoire's. He and his wife are the best people in the world. I am sorry she is not with you; she is very sensible and good-natured; I am quite delighted with her. There were mess. de Bouc, d'Oppede, de Gordes, de Souliers, madame de Buzanval, M. d'Usèz, and M. and madame de Coulanges; your health was drunk at one of the most elegant repasts I have ever witnessed: we were eager to begin. Much was said of the hand-

some reception you gave the duke d'Etrées; he has written in high terms of it to his children. Madame de Rochefort does nothing but storm against you, since she has heard you have written to her cousin without sending her a line. I would advise you to write to her, and endeavour to appease her at any rate. The eternal stay you tell me you are like to make where you are, goes to my very heart: I am not mistress of such strength of reasoning as you, and the cruel reflections I make almost destroy me: I must stop short here.——

Madame de Villars sends her compliments to you and M. de Grignan, and to the coadjutor. M. Chapelain was in raptures at receiving the remembrance you sent him; he says that the *Alomé* * is enchanting in some places, but insupportably long. The song in the piece is admirable; there is also the story of a nightingale, who stretches his little throat to drown the notes of a man who plays the lute; he comes and perches just over his head, where he strains himself till at length he falls lifeless at his feet, and is buried in the body of the lute. This description is extremely beautiful. M and madame de Coulanges send you a thousand kind remembrances: they are occupied now with the wedding: they set off at Easter, and will be at Lyons to receive me, and I shall return them the compliment at Grignan. My aunt † continues very ill; she returns you thanks for all your kindnesses; and the abbé is devoted to you.

* An Italian poem of the cavaliero Marini's.

† Madame de la Trousse.

LETTER CLXXXIII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday evening, Feb. 26, 1672.

I HAVE received the letter you sent me for M. de la Valette; whatever comes from you is dear to me: I will make him have Pelisson for his examiner, to decide whether he is qualified for a master of the requests; I cannot believe it till I see it.

Poor Madame * continues still at the point of death; her case is a very extraordinary one. But do you know we are all in an uproar at Paris? The courier is arrived from Spain, and brings word, that the queen is not only determined to abide by the Pyrenëan treaty, by which she is obliged not to turn her arms against her allies; but is likewise resolved to protect the Dutch with all her power; so that here is a dreadful war upon the point of breaking out; and for what? mere child's play. We shall attack Flanders; the Dutch will join the Spaniards; God grant we may not have the Swedes, the English, and the Germans, upon our hands too. I am almost distracted at the intelligence. Oh that some angel would descend from heaven to calm these turbulent spirits, and restore peace among them!

Our cardinal *(de Retz)* is still very ill: I render him all the little services in my power: he has a great regard for you, and believes you have the same for him. Madame de Courcelles' † affair furnishes matter of

* The dowager Madame; Margaret of Lorraine, second wife to Gaston duke of Orléans. She died the 3d April following the date of this letter.

† One of the most beautiful women of her time: her name was Maria Sidonia de Léoncourt; her father was Joachim de Léoncourt,

great mirth to the wits. The prison-fees are considerably raised since it is known she is to go on the sellette: she is handsomer than ever; and eats, drinks, and is in as good spirits as the best of them: all she complains of is, that she has not met with a single lover in prison.

I will inform you more fully of the affair you wrote to me about the other day; for I do not think that either the count de Guiche or M. de Longueville are sufficiently at the bottom of it; however, I will write to you more at large. M. Boufflers has killed a man since his death *: the circumstance was this: they were carrying him about a league from Boufflers to inter him; the corpse was on a bier in a coach; his own curate attended it: the coach overset, and the bier falling upon the curate's neck choaked him. Yesterday there was another person overset in returning in his coach from St. Germain, and died upon the spot.

Madame Scarron sups with us almost every evening, and is the most agreeable companion imaginable She takes great delight in playing with your little girl; and thinks her rather pretty than otherwise. The little creature yesterday called the abbé Têtu her papa: he denied the relationship for very substantial reasons, and we believed him. I embrace you, my love. I told you so many things in my last, that I think I have nothing left to say to you in this. I assure you that I should be at no loss for a subject, were I to tell you all my sentiments concerning you.

marquis de Marolles, governor of Thionville, and lieutenant-general of the king's forces: her mother was Isabella Clara Eugenia de Cromberg, of an illustrious house in Germany. She was the wife of Charles de Chabot, marquis of Courcelles.

* This accident gave birth to a fable of La Fontaine's, called, The Curate and Death.

LETTER CLXXXIV.

TO THE SAME.

Livri, Tuesday, March 1, 1672.

I BEGIN my letter to-day, my dear child, it being Shrove-Tuesday, and shall finish it to-morrow. If you are at St. Mary's, I am at our abbé's, who has been a little indisposed for these two days: it is not enough to create alarm, but I had rather he were quite well. Madame de Coulanges, and madame Scarron, would fain have taken me with them to Vincennes; and M. de la Rochefoucault wanted me to come to his house to hear Moliere read one of his plays; but, in truth, I refused it all with a great deal of pleasure: and here am I at my duty, writing to you with a mixture of joy and grief: indeed it is a long time since I wrote to you. So you are retired to St. Mary's! resolved not to lose a particle of the grief you are in for the death of the poor chevalier: you are for indulging it in its full extent, without having any thing to call you off. This application to sorrow, this endeavour to make the most of affliction, savours of one who is not so much concerned as another would be to have occasion for sorrow. I appeal to your own heart.

I find you have gone through the riot of the Carnival without any accident: guard yourself from the infection of the small-pox: I fear for you more than you do for yourself. Madame de la Troche is here: it is true she can come to Paris. Her stay with me last year was entirely set aside by my grief at losing you. Since then, my dear child, you have been every where, as you say, except to Paris. Your reflections upon hope are excellent: had they been made by Bourda-

loüe, all the world would have heard of them. Your wonders do not make so great a noise: *The misery of bliss* * is so charmingly said that we cannot too much admire a pen that can express such things. You say all that can be said on the subject of hope; and I am so much of your opinion, that I know not whether I ought to go to Provence or not, so great is my apprehension of being obliged to leave it again. I already see how time will then gallop; I know its way: but notwithstanding this fine reflection, my heart joins in the same conclusion with yours, and pants for nothing so earnestly as the moment of my departure from hence. I even flatter myself with the hope that something or other may happen that I may bring you back with me; but there is no talking of these things at such a distance; be assured, however, that no consideration of house or goods shall weigh any thing with me: I have not a thought but for you, and in what manner I am to proceed to get somewhat nearer to you: this holds the first place in my mind; all other things follow at hazard.

I have given your letters to the Fauxbourgs: they are admirably well written, and M. de Grignan's reflection is admired by them all. We have often thought the same thing, but you have given it a dress fit to appear in public. I did not tell them your opinion of the maxim which you think resembles a song, though I perfectly agree with you. I will endeavour to learn whether any thing more was meant, than the praise of fancy or the passions; if so, it is repugnant to strict philosophy; if not, it requires a clearer explanation.

I supped yesterday evening at Gourville's: there were Rochefoucault, la Fayette, du Plessis, and Tournais, all

* Le malheur du bonheur.

waiting the arrival of the great Pomponne; but the service of that master who is so justly dear to you both, prevented him from joining his best friends: he has a great deal of business upon his hands, on account of the number of dispatches they are sending to all parts, and the great preparations that are making to begin the war.

The archbishop of Thoulouse * has been created a cardinal at Rome: the news came just as M. de Laon † was in expectation of this dignity himself, which is a great grief to his friends. They contend, that M. de Laon has sacrificed his own interests to the service of the king, and that, rather than betray those of his country, he has slighted cardinal Altieri, who in return has served him this trick: they are in hopes he may yet have his rank; but it may be a long time first, and it is always disagreeable to be in expectation.

Benserade said, and I think pleasantly enough, that the chevalier de Lorraine's return would be a subject of joy to his friends, and of sorrow to his creatures; for not one of them remained faithful to him during his disgrace.

I know, from good authority, that it depends wholly on us to have a peace. The queen of Spain's answer was not so positive as was reported: she only declared, that she would abide by the treaty of peace, which admits of her assisting her allies whenever they stand in need of her assistance. It is the same with regard to the Portuguese: they have promised not to assist the Dutch, but will not give it under their hand: this is the whole affair: if we insist upon their signing, all is

* Peter Bonzi, afterwards archbishop of Narbonne.

† Cæsar d'Estrées, bishop of Laon: he was declared cardinal some little time afterwards: he had been cardinal *in petto* from the August of the foregoing year.

lost; if we do not, we shall soon have peace, provided the Spaniards do not declare against us. Time will clear up all this. Farewell, my dearest and best beloved child; I am afraid your great love of solitude will injure your spirits and your eyes, by fixing them too much on the ground, in your deep reveries.

LETTER CLXXXV.

WRITTEN BY MADAME LA PALATINE, ON HOPE.

What can possess you, declared enemies of the greatest blessing of life, and of the most refined pleasures of the heart? What demon can have instigated you to employ your subtle minds in the service of a bad cause? Have you so strong a hatred to hope, as to renounce the hope of praise, and of public esteem? Of what sect, or of what religion can you be, that you declaim thus boldly against the opinion of the wise, and the law of God? How can hope, lovely hope, have injured you, that you would banish it from society, and the intercourse of the good? What has it in common with the unruly passions, and ridiculous desires of the visionary? Why should you confound lawful pretensions with chimerical wishes? May we not wish with a tranquil mind, what we desire with reason? What bitterness of spirit makes you favour a cause so nearly allied to despair? Can this abominable monster, the portion of the cowardly and the damned, seduce your minds sufficiently to render you the advocates of so dreadful an opinion? Are you not aware that in combating the vices, you quarrel with the virtues, of which hope is the most noble and the most useful? What can be done without hope? Is there any action of life into which it does not enter?

Even in condemning it, have not you yourselves the hope that you shall convince us of the truth of your doctrine, and gain our admiration, by the beauty of your letters, and the novelty of your reasoning? If you do not succeed, the fault is in the cause you maintain, and not in your hope. Hope is in itself all lovely and good; it ennobles the heart of the virtuous, strengthens that of the weak, and injures none but fools, who only make use of it to deceive themselves, and to serve the vanity of their designs. Hope is, in short, the greatest blessing of the miserable. What can it have done to you, that you thus abuse it? or rather, what has the whole human race done to you, that you would deprive us of a blessing which neither tyranny nor misfortune has been able to wrest from the unhappy? Hope has always paved the way to glory; and there is scarcely a hero, and we can boast of many even in the present day, who has seen his victories exceed the boundary of his hopes. It is allowable to measure our hope by our courage; it is noble to preserve it through every difficulty; but it is equally noble to bear its entire destruction, with the same fortitude with which it was conceived. Suffer us then to hope, since it is a blessing of which you cannot deprive us. Instruct us, if you will, to regulate our wishes; teach us to select our desires; but permit us to console ourselves in our disappointment with the satisfaction that our hopes were well founded. The loss of a long-expected good is but the grief of a day; whereas the hope of possessing it, has been the comfort of many years, and the charm of a thousand delightful hours. No longer then revile this divine and cherished passion. Be it poor * or not, its merit is the same; and whatever you may say, meagre

* Bourdaloüe had said that Hope was thin, and Despair fat.

hope is better than robust despair. The outrage that was offered to it yesterday in the presence of the most illustrious of its lean partisans *(maigreurs)* in France, has not injured its fame; and despair, fat and plump as it is represented to us, has made no impression upon my heart. I know not whether Judas was fat or lean. The Scriptures that record his despair do not mention his corpulency. Be this as it may, it is certain that he hanged himself for want of hope. His example is not a good one; and in spite of all your arguments, I shall continue to hope during my whole life, and will never hang myself.

LETTER CLXXXVI.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO MADAME DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Tuesday, March 4, 1672.

You [illegible]hen, my dear child, that you cannot possibly keep hatred alive so long. You are right: it is much the same with me; but then guess what I do instead of it: why I love as ardently, and for as long a time, a certain person that you know. You seem to abandon yourself to a negligence that gives me great concern. You seldom want an excuse for it, it is so much your natural inclination; but, you know I always found fault with you for it, and that I do so still. One might make an excellent personage of madame du Fresnoy and you: both of you run into extremes; certainly yours may better be borne with than hers, but it is still an extreme. I wonder sometimes at the many nothings that drop from my pen: I never curb it; but am extremely happy that such trifles amuse you. They would be very disagreeable to many people; but I beg you will not regret the

want of them when you have me with you, or I shall grow jealous of my own letters.

The dinner that M. de Valavoire gave, entirely eclipsed ours, not for the quantity, but extreme rarity of the dishes. My dear child, how you look! Madame de la Fayette will scold you without mercy. For God's sake dress your head to-morrow: excessive negligence eclipses beauty, and you carry your sadness beyond all bounds. I have made your compliments: those that are sent you in return surpass the number of the stars. *A propos* of stars. La Gourville was the other day at mad. de St. Lou's, who has just lost her old page. La Gourville, among other things, was talking of her *star* *, that her star did this, and her star did that: at length Segrais, who was there, rousing himself as if he had been asleep, said to her, "Do you think then, madam, that you have a star to yourself? I hear people every where talking about their stars. Why, there are but a thousand and twenty-two in all; and do you suppose out of so small a number every one can have a star to himself?" He said this with so much humour, and yet with so grave a face, that it put an end to their sorrow in an instant. Your letters were given to mad. de Vaudemont by d'Hacqueville. To tell you the truth, I see him very seldom now. Great fish swallow up the little ones, you know. Farewell, my dearest love: I am getting Bajazet, and La Fontaine's fables, to send you for your amusement. M. de la Rochefoucault gives his maxim the unlimited sense which your philosophy condemns. Epictetus would not have been of his opinion.

* It is a custom in France for people of quality to give their lacqueys and pages names of their own choosing, as La Fleur (flower), Jasmin (jessamine), &c. The page here mentioned by mad. de Gourville was called Etoile (star).

LETTER CLXXXVII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Wednesday evening, March 9, 1672.

TALK to me no more of my letters, I beseech you, my child. I have just received one from you that carries every thing before it; it is lovely, brilliant, full of ideas, and full of affection: the style is so just and concise, that it cannot fail of pleasing to the highest degree even without loving you as I do. I should tell you how much your letters delight me oftener than I do, were it not for the fear of being tiresome; but whether I tell you so or not, be assured I am always delighted with them. Mad de Coulanges is equally so with some passages I showed her, and which it was impossible to keep to myself: there is a vein of good humour and sprightliness that runs through the whole, and gives it a fine effect.

You were for a long time quite buried in melancholy: I was very uneasy at it; but I find the game of the goose has revived you as it did the Greeks. By the by, I wish you had never played at any other game: a continual run of ill-luck is very provoking and disagreeable: there is no bearing to be the constant butt of fortune: the superiority of others over us, though in trivial concerns, never fails to mortify our vanity, and give us vexation; as Nicole admirably observes. I am very angry with fortune, and am more than ever convinced of her blindness, by the manner in which she has treated you.

You want to know the symptoms of this love, of which I spoke to you the other day. Imprimis, To be the first on all occasions to deny it: to affect an air of

great indifference, which is a sure mark of the contrary: the opinion of those who can judge from being near: the public voice: an entire suspension of all motion in the globular machine: a neglect of ordinary concerns to attend to a single one: a continual satirising old people, who are so foolish as to be in love. "Such nonsense! they must be idiots! fools! And with a young woman too! Very pretty indeed! it would become me mighty well! I had rather break both my arms and legs." And then we make answer internally: "Indeed what you say is very true; but, for all that, you are in love: you tell us all these fine things: your reflections are doubtless very just, very true, very tormenting; but for all that, you are in love; reason is on your side, but love is stronger than reason; at the same time you are sick, you weep, you are out of humour, and you are in love." If you should drive M. de Vence * to this pass, I desire, my dear, you will make me your confidante. In the mean while, you cannot have a more agreeable acquaintance. He is a prelate of distinguished understanding and merit; and one of the greatest geniuses of his age. You have admired his verses; enjoy his prose: he excels equally in both, and deserves to be ranked in the number of your friends. You very pleasantly quote the example of the lady, who took pleasure in turning the heads of all the monks that came in her way; but it would be a much more glorious thing for you to do this by M. de Vence, who is so famous for the soundness, clearness, and excellence of his. In him you may say you have found a real treasure in Provence: make the most of this, and trust to fortune for the rest.

I forbid you, my dear child, to send me your picture;

* Anthony de Godeau, bishop of Vence and Grasse.

if you are looking well, have it painted, but keep the delightful present for me till I come to you; for I should be very sorry to leave it here: so take my advice, and, in the mean while, accept of a present from me that surpasses all presents past, present, and to come: this is not saying too much; for it is a pearl necklace worth twelve thousand crowns: a large sum, you will say; but not more than I am willing to bestow on you. In short, examine it well, weigh it, observe how beautifully it is set, and then tell me what you think of it. It is the finest I ever saw, and has been greatly admired here: I had it from the Venetian ambassador, our late neighbour, who is dead. I have sent you a book by the desire of my uncle Sévigné *. I do not imagine it is a romance: I shall not give him the trouble of sending you La Fontaine's Fables, which are . . . . . but you will judge for yourself.

You are a dear creature, not to be with child; but you seem to have thoughts that way, which make me tremble. Your beauty subjects you to many dangers; because it is useless to you. You say you think it is as well to be with child as not, it is an amusement. A fine reason indeed! but, for Heaven's sake, my child, consider that it is utterly destroying your health, and your life.

We do all in our power to amuse our good cardinal: Corneille has read him a piece of his, which is soon to be brought out. It puts me very much in mind of the beauties of the ancients. Molière is to read him his

* Renaud de Sévigné: he had retired to Port Royal des Champs, where he passed the latter part of his life in exercises of the strictest piety, and died there the 16th of March, 1676. See the Necrologe de Port Royal des Champs, p. 117. Amsterdam edit.

Trissotin *, which is extremely diverting; and Despreaux will give him his Lutrin and Art of Poetry †: this is all we can do for him. He loves you sincerely, and often talks of you to me, and we seldom find ourselves so ready to finish your praises, as we are to begin them. But, alas! when we reflect that our dear child has been so cruelly torn from us, nothing is capable of comforting us: as for me, I should be very sorry to be comforted: I neither pride myself on courage nor philosophy; but simply follow where my heart leads the way. It was said the other day, and I believe I told you, that the true sign of a good heart was its capacity for loving: if this rule is just, I am become a person of great consequence, and should be not a little vain, had I not a thousand reasons to make me humble.

Adhémar, I believe, loves me well enough; but he bears too great a hatred to the bishop, and so do you as well. This is owing to the life you lead. Were you here, you would not have time to do it. M. de Usèz has shown me a memorial of yours, which he has corrected and altered, and with which he will work miracles. Trust wholly to him; you have nothing to do but to send him whatever you think proper, without being in the least apprehensive that he will suffer any thing to go out of his hands till he has made it perfect. In every thing that comes from you, there is a little air of impetuosity, that is the true mark of the workman, like Bassan's dog ‡.

Here is a piece of news for you: attend to me.

* A character in the comedy of the Learned Ladies, *(Les Femmes Sçavantes)*.

† These two pieces had not then attained the degree of perfection they have appeared in since.

‡ Bassan was a painter who introduced his dog in all his pictures.

The king has given the messieurs de Charôt to understand that he will make them dukes and peers of France; that is to say, they are immediately to have the honours of the Louvre, with an assurance of the first seats in parliament that are disposed of. The son is made lieutenant-general of Picardy, a place which has long been vacant, with a pension of twenty thousand francs, and two hundred thousand francs more which he is to receive of M. Duras, for the place of captain of the *gardes de corps*, which he and his father are to resign in his favour. Think of this, and tell me, if Duras does not appear very fortunate to you. This place, for the confidence it implies, and the honour of being constantly about the king's person, is inestimable. While it is his turn to be in waiting, he will follow the king to the army, and have the whole command of the household.

We hear of nothing but war, and you may judge how disagreeable the subject is to me. There are some people here almanack-makers, who pretend to know perfectly how matters will go; but I fancy they will find themselves deceived this campaign. All I hope is, that the cavalry will not be exposed in any of the sieges in Holland: however, we must live to see the cloud dispersed. I have seen the marquis de Vence, and he looked so young, that I asked him how his mamma did. Coulanges set me right; and cardinal de Retz changed the conversation by talking of you. I am always wishing for Adhémar to repeat to me again how much you love me. You assure me yourself, that it is with a degree of tenderness answerable to mine. If I am not contented with that, surely I am very hard to be pleased.

I have just received your letter of Ash-Wednesday: indeed, my child, you quite embarrass me with your

commendation and thanks. This is only putting me in mind of what I would do for you, and makes me sigh that it is so little in my power to satisfy my inclination. Would I could so load you with benefits, as to oblige you to become ungrateful; for, as we have often said, that is the only thing that is left when one has been so much obliged as to be no longer able to make a return: but, alas! I am not happy enough to reduce you to such a strait. Your thanks are more than sufficient to repay all I can do. How amiable you are, and how pleasantly you express yourself upon the subject! But now about this breland*, what a folly is it to lose so much money at such a rascally game! It has been banished from us for a downright cut-throat. We do things in a more serious manner. You play against all chance: you lose for ever; take my advice, and do not continue it: consider it is throwing money away without having any amusement for it; on the contrary, you have paid 5 or 6000 francs to be the mere dupe of fortune. But I am rather too warm, my dear, and must say with Tartuffe, "'tis through excess of zeal." And now I mention plays, here is Bajazet for you: if I could send you Champmêlée at the same time, you would find more beauties in it, for without this actress the piece loses half its merit.—I am mad after Corneille: he is going to give us Pulcheria, where we shall trace

La main qui crayonna
La mort du grand Pompée et l'ame de Cinna†.

In short, every thing must bow to his superior genius. Here is Fontaine's fable too on the adventure of M. de Boufflers's curate, who was killed in the coach by his

* A game of cards.

† The same great hand, that with such matchless art
Drew Pompey's death, and painted Cinna's heart,

dead patron*. There was something very extraordinary in the affair itself: the fable is pretty; but not to be compared with the one that follows it: I do not understand the Milk-pot †.

I frequently hear from my poor boy. This war vexes me extremely: in the first place, on his account, and then on account of some others, that I have a great regard for. Madame de Vaudemont is at Antwerp, and seems to have no design of returning; her husband is against us. Madame de Courcelles ‡ will be on the sellette soon: I do not know whether she will touch the adamantine heart of mons. d'Avaux § in that situation; but hitherto he has been as severe to her in prison, as he was in his reply. My dear child, I know no bounds to my writing, and yet I must put an end to it at last: when I write to other people, I care not how soon I have done; but I love nothing so well as to write to you. I have a thousand good wishes for you from M. Rochefoucault, our cardinal, Barillon, and especially from madame Scarron, who knows perfectly well how to please me by praising you. She admires you unboundedly. As for M. Coulanges and his wife, the abbé, my aunt, my cousin, La Mousse, there is but one cry amongst them, and that is, to remember them to you; but I am not at all in a humour to make litanies; there are many even now that I have forgotten: but this is enough to last for a long time. I continue still very fond of my dear little girl, notwithstanding her brother is such a beauty.

* See Fable XI. of Book VII. p. 54. Paris edition of 1746.

† Another fable of La Fontaine's *(Le pot au lait)*, the moral of which is the same with the foregoing. See Fab. X. of Book VII., the same edition.

‡ See the Letter of 26th February, 1671.

§ The president de Mêmes, father of the chief president of that name.

LETTER CLXXXVIII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, March 11, 1672.

I HAVE undertaken to-day to write you the shortest letter that ever was written: we shall see. The reason of my Wednesday's letters being so immoderately long is this, that I receive one of yours on Mondays; I immediately sit down to answer it: I begin it, and lay it by again. Tuesday, if any business or news presents itself, I resume my letter, to send you an account of what passes. Wednesday, I receive another letter from you, I have that to answer, and then to conclude. All this, you see, must necessarily make a little volume. Sometimes too a singular thing happens, and that is, that, forgetting what I have told you in the beginning of my letter, I write the same thing again at the end; for I never read my letter over till I have quite finished it; and when I find the stupid repetitions I have made, I make such faces at myself as would frighten you; but that is all, for it is then too late to think of altering it, and so I let it go as it is, and make up my packet. I tell you this, once for all, that you may know how to excuse this instance of dotage, when you meet with it again. Mademoiselle de Meri has sent you some of the prettiest shoes in the world; I observed one pair, among the rest, so very small, that they seem fit for nothing but to keep one's bed in. Do you remember how you laughed at this idea one evening? And now, my dear child, I desire you will not be at the pains of thanking me for all my good intentions, nor for every little trifle I send you; but reflect upon the principle that actuates me; passionate love and ten-

derness is not repaid with thanks: consult your heart, and it will teach you other ways of being grateful. I have seen the chevalier and the abbé Valbelle: I am become a Provençal; I openly avow it; and all the Bretons are jealous. Farewell, my love; I fancy you know how truly I am yours, without my telling you so; and for that reason I have resolved not to write a long letter this time; though, if I knew any thing that would divert you, I should certainly add it; for I should take no pleasure in adhering too strictly to this foolish resolution.

LETTER CLXXXIX.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Wednesday, March 16, 1672.

You talk to me of my departure: alas! my dear, I languish in the pleasing hope of it; nothing now stops me, but my poor aunt*, who is dying with violent pain and dropsy: it breaks my heart to see her sufferings, and to hear the tender and affecting manner in which she talks to me: her courage, patience, and resignation, are all together admirable. Mons. d'Hacqueville and I observe her distemper from day to day; he sees my inmost heart, and knows what grief it is to me not to be at liberty at present: I am entirely guided by him, and we shall see between this and Easter, whether her disorder increases as much as it has done since I came hither; if it does, she will die in our arms: but if she receives any relief, and is likely to languish for any length of time, I shall then set out as soon as M. de Coulanges comes back. Our poor abbé is as vexed at

* Henrietta de Coulanges, marchioness de la Trousse.

this as myself; but we shall be able to judge how it will turn out by next month. I can think of nothing else: you cannot wish to see me so much as I do to embrace you; so put some bounds to your ambition, and do not hope ever to equal me in that respect.

My son tells me, they lead a wretched life in Germany, and are working all in the dark. He was greatly concerned at the death of the poor chevalier. You ask me if I am as fond of life as ever: I must own to you, that I experience mortifications, and severe ones too; but I am still unhappy at the thoughts of death: I consider it so great a misfortune to see the termination of all my pursuits, that I should desire nothing better, if it were practicable, than to begin life again. I find myself engaged in a scene of confusion and trouble: I was embarked in life without my own consent, and know I must leave it again: that distracts me; for how shall I leave it? in what manner? by what door? at what time? in what disposition? Am I to suffer a thousand pains and torments that will make me die in a state of despair? Shall I lose my senses? Am I to die by some sudden accident? How shall I stand with God? What shall I have to offer to him? Will fear and necessity make my peace with him? Shall I have no other sentiment, but that of fear? What have I to hope? Am I worthy of heaven? or have I deserved the torments of hell? Dreadful alternative! Alarming uncertainty! Can there be greater madness than to place our eternal salvation in uncertainty? Yet what is more natural, or can be more easily accounted for, than the foolish manner in which I have spent my life? I am frequently buried in thoughts of this nature, and then death appears so dreadful to me, that I hate life more for leading me to it, than I do for all the thorns that are strewed in its way. You will ask me then, if I would wish to live

for ever?. Far from it; but if I had been consulted, I would very gladly have died in my nurse's arms; it would have spared me many vexations, and would have insured heaven to me at a very easy rate: but let us talk of something else.

I am quite provoked that you have received Bajazet from any hand but mine: that fellow Barbin* has served me this trick, out of spite, because I do not write Princesses of Cleves and Montpensier†. You form a very just and true judgement of Bajazet, and you will find that I am of your opinion: I wish I could send you Champmêlée to enliven it a little. The character of Bajazet wants life, and the manners of the Turks are ill preserved: their marriages have less ceremony; the plot is badly managed; and we are at a loss to account for so much slaughter: the piece has doubtless its beauties; but there is nothing superlative; nothing perfect; none of those fine strokes, that, like Corneille's, make one tremble. Let us be cautious how we compare Racine with him; the difference between them is great: the pieces of the latter are in many places cold and feeble; nor will he ever be able to surpass his Alexander and Andromache. Many persons consider Bajazet as inferior to both these, and it is my opinion also, if I may be allowed to give it. Racine's plays are written for Champmêlée, and not for posterity‡; whenever he grows old and ceases to be in love, it will be seen whether I am mistaken or not. Long live then our old friend Corneille; let us forgive the bad

* A famous bookseller of that name.

† Two romances written by madame de la Fayette, by which Barbin got a great deal of money.

‡ The event has proved by Mithridates, Phædra, and Athaliah, that madame de Sévigné's judgement partook of the prejudice of the times in which she wrote.

lines we occasionally meet with for the sake of those divine sallies that so often transport us, those masterly strokes that bid defiance to imitation. Despreaux has said as much before me; and it is in general the opinion of every one of good taste; let us therefore maintain it.

I send you a witticism of madame de Cornuel's, which has highly diverted the crowd. Young M. Tombonneau has quitted the long robe, and taken to the jacket and trowsers: in short, he is resolved to go to sea; I do not know in what way the land has offended him: however, somebody told madame de Cornuel that he was going to sea. "Lord bless the man!" said she, "has he been bitten by a mad dog?" As this was said off hand, it raised a great laugh.

Madame de Courcelles is greatly embarrassed. All her petitions have been rejected; but she says she is still in hopes that she shall have some favour shown her, as men are to be her judges. Our coadjutor, for instance, would do nothing for her; you tell me he is at present occupied like St. Ambrose. I think you may be very well satisfied that your girl was made after his *image and likeness*, without having your son like him too; but with all due deference to the beauty of the coadjutor, where did the little fellow get his handsome mouth, and all the rest of his charms? I find, after all, he is like his sister; this resemblance puzzles me a good deal. I love you dearly, my child, for not being pregnant; content yourself then with being *uselessly handsome*, for the pleasure of not being continually dying. I cannot pity you for having no butter in Provence, because you have admirable oil and excellent fish. Ah! my dear, I can easily judge how people like you must employ their time and thoughts among your Provençals: I should think of them just as you do, but

pity you from my soul for being obliged to pass so many of the choicest years of your life amongst them. I am so little desirous of making a figure at your court in Provence, and have formed so just a conception of it, from what I know of that in Britany; that for the same reason that, in less than three days after being at Vitré, I wished for nothing so much as to return to my Rocks, so I solemnly declare to you the sole object of my desire is to pass the summer with you at Grignan, and no where else. My St. Laurence wine is at Adhémar's; I shall have it to-morrow: I thanked you for it long ago in my heart; that is very obliging, you will say. M. de Laon is very well pleased at the manner in which he was made a cardinal. I am told that M. de Montausier*, in talking to the dauphin about the dignity of cardinal, told him, that it depended entirely upon the pope, and that if he had a mind to make a cardinal of a groom, he might. Just at that instant cardinal Bonzi entered; the dauphin seeing him, asked him, if it were true that the pope could make a groom a cardinal. M. de Bonzi was a little surprised at first, till guessing the affair, he replied, that doubtless the pope might make choice of whom he pleased for that dignity; but that he had never heard of his holiness taking a cardinal from his stables. I had this story from the cardinal de Bruillon.

I have had a great deal of conversation with M. d'Usèz; he will acquaint you with the conference he has had too; it is an admirable one; his understanding is so clear, and his words, in general, so well chosen, that they cannot fail of having great weight on these occasions: in short, he says and does every thing well.

* The duke de Montausier was not only allowed by every one to be utterly incapable of flattery or falsehood; but was even at a loss in the common arts of dissimulation at court.

What was told you of Jarzé was reported, but not with any degree of certainty: they pretend that the lady's joy was excessive on account of the chevalier de Lorraine's return. It is reported likewise, that the count de Guiche and mad. de Brissac are so much at cross purposes with one another, that there is need of an interpreter between them. Write a line or two to our cardinal; he loves you; the Fauxbourg * loves you; and mad. Scarron loves you; she is to pass her Lent here, and spends almost every evening with us. Barillon is here still: and would to heaven, my dear child, that you were here too!

LETTER CXC.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Wednesday, March 23, 1672.

MADAME de Villars, Chapelain, and another person, are charmed with your sentiments on ingratitude: do not think me ridiculous; I know to whom I show these short extracts of your letters: I know whom I have to deal with, and preserve all the necessary precautions of time and place; but, in short, you have sometimes a delightful way of saying things: you may believe me; I know what I advance. I will read one day or other some passages to you that will please you; especially that upon ingratitude.

I like your little history of the painter extremely †;

* Meaning the duke de Rochefoucault and madame de la Fayette, who lived both in the Fauxbourg (or suburb) of St. Germain, and to whom madame de Sévigné made frequent visits.

† A painter in Provence, of the name of Fauchier, who was seized with so violent a fit of the colic, while painting mad. de Grignan's picture in the habit of a Magdalen, that he died the next morning.

but, poor man, he must die! Your hair curling *naturally* with curling-irons, powdered *naturally* with a pound of powder, and the *natural* vermilion of your cheeks, laid on with carmine, is very amusing; but after all, you were as handsome as an angel: I am very glad you are well enough to sit to him for your picture: and that in the midst of all your negligence, you can preserve so many charms. Mad. Scarron has received your embassies: there are no praises she does not bestow on you, no esteem she thinks too great to entertain for you.

The chancellor will not have so magnificent a funeral as was expected; they wanted a prince of the blood to head the ceremony. The prince said, he was indisposed; the duke said, it might have done very well in former times, but at present princes were of more importance than they were then: the princes of Conti said, they could not do what the duke had refused to do: in short, the chancellor's family are in despair about it; it was to no purpose to urge the instance of the chancellor de Belliévre, whose funeral was honoured with the presence of a prince of Conti.

The count de Guiche told us wonders the other day about the wits of your warm climate; he says he never passed his time more agreeably than whilst among them. I did not remember you had ever mentioned a single person to me as the least distinguished for wit or understanding. Believe me, my dear, it is with the greatest concern that I find you so resigned to our separation, while I feel it in my very marrow, without being able to receive the least comfort. As to my journey, it now depends wholly upon my aunt; but in a month's time we shall see what we have to expect: this is now the only thing that stops me, otherwise I should set out with M. and madame de Coulanges; the abbé and I do nothing but pine for the day of our departure.

Every thing seems to happen purposely to vex and torment me. I am busied now in getting my son's equipage ready; besides accepting and returning bills of exchange. Every body is in debt, or occupied with their departure. It is reported the small-pox is at Grignan: is it true? If so, I shall be a little easier at being detained here. After all, my dear, be assured, that we think of nothing but setting out; no consideration takes place of that desire, nor of our journey; even the hot weather shall not stop me a moment.

You ask me what my aunt's disorder is. It is a flatulent and watery dropsy together: she is swelled to an amazing size; milk, which was the only thing that used to give her relief, can no longer repair the great waste of moisture; she is quite exhausted, her liver is affected, and she is sixty-six; such is her disorder: next month will determine whether she is to live or die: I pass many hours with her, and am greatly concerned to see her in such a state. What you say upon the *adamantine* heart is admirable; it would be very convenient to have such a one, not in the sense we mean, but literally adamantine; for want of it one is subject to a thousand torments. It is certain that love is a proud thing, and so it ought to be. M. de Grignan is very happy in being so good a Christian; I hope he will be able to convert me.

Monsieur de Lauzun's place is not yet disposed of. You may make your own reflections upon that, as well as upon his fire-affair; it would have been a curious adventure to have burnt poor M. Fouquet, who bears his confinement so nobly, without giving himself up to fruitless despair. Nothing is talked of but war: the king has 200,000 men on foot: all Europe is in motion; and it is very plain, as you say, that the poor globular machine is left to itself. The cardinal (de Retz) and I

often talk of you; he has a sincere regard for you: and I, what have I, think you? My poor aunt returns you thanks for your kind remembrance of her. La Mousse trembles for his philosophy. Say a word or two to the cardinal about your machines; your machines that love; your machines that have the power of choice; your machines that are jealous, and have fears. Go, go! Descartes never could pretend to make us believe all this.

LETTER CXCI.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Wednesday, March 30, 1672.

Are you not too good, my dear child? You say you love my letters; you wish them always to be long, and you flatter me with the pleasing idea that you do not like them so well when they are short: but then poor Grignan has enough to do, if his complaisance for you obliges him to read such volumes. I remember he used to wonder how people could read long letters; he seems to be much altered in his opinion: but I depend upon your prudence, not to let him see what you think will tire him. I have to ask your pardon: I thought you had not answered the cardinal's letter, but I find you have, and extremely well too. I must also own to you, that I have wickedly suppressed the compliments of madame de Villars. I have often mentioned her to you in my letters, and have taken care not to tell you all she has said to me: be not angry with her, she loves and admires you: I see her very frequently, she is delighted to talk of you, and to read passages of your letters; this attaches me to her extremely. She will set

out at Easter, notwithstanding the war; she must come back as she can if the Spaniards are wicked. As they have plenty of money, these Villars*, to travel about and make a great show, it is a trifle not worth their attention. They say, that the English have engaged and defeated five sail of Dutch men of war; and that the ambassador told the king, that his master† had already begun the war by sea, and hoped that he would now make his promise good, and begin it by land.

You know, my child, what an esteem I have for the name of Roquesante‡, and how much I venerate his virtue. You may be sure that his recommendation and yours must have great weight with me; but unfortunately in this case my credit and good will are not equally strong. You have given the president in question such an excellent character, that it would be an honour to have it in my power to serve him: at all events I will mention it; but really every thing is now kept such a profound secret at Versailles, that we must wait with patience the decision of the oracle. As to M. de Roquesante, if you forgot to make my compliments to him, very particularly, you and I shall certainly quarrel. You shudder at our abbé's fever; I am obliged to you: but as you shudder by yourself, and the good abbé did not shudder at all, you see plainly, that I did not shudder: his disorder was a constant flux; he has acted

* Irony! they were very poor. M. de Villars was going as ambassador to Madrid.

† Charles II. of England.

‡ One of the judges of the parliament of Aix, a man of real merit, and one of the commissioners appointed to try M. Fouquet: he gave such clear proofs of integrity and discernment, that Mad. de Sévigné ever afterwards held him in the highest esteem.

with prudence; and, I am persuaded, has added twelve years to his life: God grant it. I have said for you all you desired me to say, and he is much pleased. My aunt is continually thanking you: the state she is in would pierce the most insensible heart: she swells every day, and nothing she takes has the least effect: she said to me not long ago, I am a lost woman, my child. She prepares herself for death, and speaks of it without fear: she only expresses her astonishment, that so much pain and torture should be required to put an end to one so feeble as she is. Some kinds of death are certainly very dreadful and cruel; hers is the most deplorable that can be imagined: she receives all the little attentions I pay her with the greatest affection; I bestow them with the same feeling; and am, indeed, so much afflicted at the agony I see her suffer, and the despair my poor cousin is in, that I cannot refrain from tears.

I will tell you, my dear child, a thought that has occurred to me on the frequent losses you and M. de Grignan sustain at cards. I would have you both be cautious. It is not pleasant to be made a dupe of; and be assured, that it is not natural to be perpetually the winner or the loser. It is not long since I was let into the tricks of the hôtel de la Vieuville. You remember, I suppose, how our pockets were picked there. You are not to imagine every body plays as fairly as you do yourself. The concern I have for your interest makes me say so much; and as it comes from a heart entirely devoted to you, I am persuaded you will not be displeased at it. Neither will you, I suppose, at knowing that Queroüaille *, whose fortune had been predicted before she left this kingdom, has fully verified the prediction. The king of England was passionately fond of her,

* Afterwards duchess of Portsmouth, mistress of Charles II.

and she, on her side, had no aversion to him: in short, she is now about eight months gone with child. Poor Castlemain * is turned off: such is the fate of mistresses in that kingdom. While I am upon this subject, I must tell you, with all due deference to the wisdom of M. de Grignan, that the son of F—— † and the chevalier de Lorraine, (I do not know whether you can understand me) is brought up openly and indiscriminately with the children of madame d'Armagnac, and that at the return of the chevalier they played him a trick to prove the strength of blood. He confirmed all they said about the child, and thought him so pretty and became so strongly attached to him, that at last they told him the truth: he was delighted. Madame d'Armagnac continues her kindness, and educates him under the name of the chevalier de Lorraine. If you know this already it will not entertain you much. Adhémar is the proper person to relate these things to you: I feel less inclination to relate news to you, knowing he is more in the way of hearing it than I am.

I have received your letter of the 23d, written on the wings of the wind, as was mine of Friday last: let me tell you, my dear child, it is a charming one, though not an answer to mine; but it is worth a thousand answers; and it is thus then that you write to me when you have nothing to say! Indeed I am in the highest degree delighted with it. It contains a thousand kind and tender things; and I must own, that I take pleasure in flattering myself with their being all true. But who is this Breton that you serve for my sake? I assure you all the Provençals find an interest in me.

* The countess of Castlemain, a former mistress of that monarch.

† This initial is intended to designate mademoiselle de Fouilloux, maid of honour to Madame, whose reputation was somewhat equivocal.

The poor abbé * is to make his public act to-day: what a joke! They are going to dispute with him, to plague and torment him, and use all their endeavours to puzzle him: and yet he must answer to all. Nothing, in my opinion, can be more unjust than such proceedings, which must sour the mind greatly. You talk about the weather; our winter has been delightful: we have had for three months together a fine clear frost; now it is over, and spring begins to make its appearance. Nothing can be more prudent than you are: how comes it then that you are so extravagant? I am shocked at the inconstancy of M. de Vardes: he was not so till his passion began to cool, and has no other excuse than that he can love no longer: this is very cruel; but I had rather it were so, than to be left for another: this is an old quarrel between us: indeed, there are many things which I dislike in M. de Vardes. If Corbinelli wishes me in Provence, it is no more than I do myself every day of my life.

M. and madame de Coulanges are much indebted to you for all your kindness: they intend writing to you. I shall see them set out with great regret. M. de Coulanges fully purposes to see *Jacquemar* and *Marguerite* † before he dies. As for his wife, she is to go to Grignan, where, I hope, we shall receive her together, after she has done me the honours of Lyons. I was told this evening, that the abbé Grignan had performed wonders at the Sorbonne to-day: our cardinal is in raptures at it.

* Louis Joseph Adhémar de Monteil, brother to M. de Grignan, nominated in 1680 to the bishopric of Evreux, and afterwards to that of Carcassonne.

† Two figures that strike the hour on the clock in the belfrey at Lambesc.

LETTER CXCII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, April 1, 1672.

WHAT you have written to Guitaut, my dear child, respecting the hopes you are in of seeing me shortly in Provence, has filled me with transports of joy. You can easily judge the pleasure one has in hearing such things from a third person, however well one might know them before: yet let me assure you, that even this cannot add to the desire I have of coming to you, for it is infinite. My aunt is my only hinderance: she is so very ill, that I do not think it possible for her to continue long in her present condition: I will let you know how she goes on; for this is the thing of greatest consequence to me at present.

I saw mad. de Verneuil yesterday, who is returned from Vernueil and the jaws of death: a milk diet has restored her to her health: she is handsome and well shaped: there is no longer any dispute between her boddice and mine; she is not so red and bloated as she used to be, but is quite pleasing: she is kind, obliging, and can speak well of people: she desired a thousand kind remembrances to you.

Madame de Chaulnes and M. de Barillon played yesterday the scene between Vardes and mademoiselle de T... till we were all of us ready to cry: they out-did themselves in it. As to Champmêlée, she is so extraordinary a performer, that in your life you never saw any like her: in short, it is the actress, and not the play, that the town runs after. I went to Ariana wholly for the sake of seeing her: the play itself is dull and insipid, the rest of the players execrable; but when

Champmêlée appears, you hear a general murmur of applause, every body is charmed, the whole house sympathises in her distress.

The chevalier de Lorraine went the other day to see La F. . . . : she wanted to put on the forsaken nymph, and affected a great deal of confusion at the sight of him. The chevalier, with his frank open countenance, was resolved to put her out of her pain at once, and said to her, "What ails you, mademoiselle? What makes you so sad? Is there any thing extraordinary in what has happened between us? We loved each other once, and now we do not. Constancy is no longer looked upon as a virtue in our age: it will be best for us to forget what has passed, and behave like other people. This is a very pretty dog of yours: who gave it you:" And so ended this curious love-affair.

What book are you reading now, my dear? I am reading the discovery of the Indies by Christopher Columbus, which diverts me exceedingly; but your little girl diverts me still more: I love her dearly, and I do not see how I can help it: she is very fond of your picture, and is talking to it so prettily, that I must go and kiss her.

LETTER CXCIII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Wednesday, April 6, 1762.

My aunt's illness makes me hardly know where I am, or what I do: the abbé and I are quite out of patience about it, and are resolved, if it should be likely to last, to set out for Provence; for even good-nature should have its bounds. You may always rest assured, that I have a stronger inclination to set out, than you can

have for me to do so. You may think this is saying a great deal, and so do I too; but it is impossible to say more than I think on that subject. I never fail to tell my aunt of your kind remembrances. Though she is sensible that she is very near death, yet her constant attention to the feelings of others makes her dissemble her sentiments, and seem to have hope in medicines, that she is certain can no longer have any efficacy, solely to prevent driving my poor cousin to despair; but, when she finds herself at liberty, and can give vent to her words, then we see what her true thoughts are, and that she looks upon the approach of death with the greatest calmness, resignation, and constancy.

I am frightened at the dangers that attend you in Provence. Your dear little boy however has escaped the small-pox; but then the plague: what do you think of that? I am dreadfully alarmed at the thoughts of it: it is a disease that has not its equal, and from which the sun of your climate is ill calculated to defend those on whom he shines. I desire his excellency the governor will, in his wisdom, give all necessary orders upon the occasion.

Saturday last the duke gave a hunting-match to *the angels* *, and afterwards a supper at St. Maur, of the most delicate fish the sea could afford. From thence they returned to a small house near the hôtel de Condé, where after the clock had struck twelve, for which they waited very scrupulously, there was served up the most elegant *medianoche* that ever was seen, consisting of the richest and most exquisite viands of all sorts. This little excursion has not been very well looked upon, and mad. de Grancei's great good-nature has been the sub-

* Mesdames de Marci and de Grancei, daughters to the marshal de Grancei.

ject of general admiration. The company consisted of the countess of Soissons, Mesdames de Coëtquen and Bordeaux, several gentlemen, and, among the rest, the chevalier de Lorraine: there were hautboys, bagpipes and violins, but not a word of the duchess or Lent; the one was in her own apartment, and the other in the cloisters. The ladies were all brown beauties; it has been thought they wanted a little yellow to set them off.

M. de Coulanges is in despair about the painter's death *. Did not I say he would die? This gives a great grace to the beginning of the history; but the catastrophe is very melancholy and vexatious for me, who made so sure of the fair *Magdalen with her fine natural curls* †.

I am charmed to find you are not with child. Ah! my dear, enjoy awhile the pleasure of being in health: take some respite, and do not add this vexation to the many others I meet with in life. The old Madame ‡ is dead of an apoplexy, to which she has had a tendency for more than a year. So now there is the palace of Luxembourg for Mademoiselle, and we shall take possession of it soon. Madame had cut down all the trees on her side of the garden through pure contradiction; that beautiful garden looks quite ridiculous: Providence, however, has saved it from ruin. Mademoiselle has nothing to do now, but to cut them down on both sides, and then put Le Notre § into them, who will soon convert them into a second Thuilleries. She could not be

* The painter mentioned in Letter 190.

† See the note to that part of the letter.

‡ Margaret of Lorraine, second wife to Gaston of France, duke of Orléans.

§ The most famous gardener of his time.

prevailed upon to see her mother-in-law when she was dying: this was not very heroic. M. de Lorraine's treaty of marriage is broken off after all: this is a business for your poor friend *. I have made your compliments to Duras and the Charôts. The marquis of Villeroy will not be permitted to leave Lyons this campaign: his father was assured of this, on asking leave for his son to return to the army. The true reason of his disgrace is not known. M. de la Rochefoucault is relapsed into so dreadful a fit of the gout, accompanied with so violent a fever, that he is worse than you have ever seen him: he entreats you to pity him; and I would defy you to see him without being affected. My dear child, I must leave you. I repent having wished for a heart of adamant; for I should be very sorry not to love you as much as I do, whatever pain it may cost me. Do not you wish for it neither: let us keep the hearts we have: you know very well the way to mine.

LETTER CXCIV.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, April 8, 1672.

War is at length declared, and nothing is now talked of but departures. Canaples has asked the king's permission to serve in the English army; and is gone, very much displeased at not having been employed in France. Marshal du Plessis is not to leave Paris: he is become a sober citizen, and a canon; he has laid aside his laurels, and will be a mere observer of events: nor do I think his part a bad one, considering the great

* The princess of Vaudemont.

reputation he has gained. He told the king, he could not help envying his children the honour of serving his majesty; and that he now wished for nothing so much as death, since he could no longer be of use to him. The king embraced him, and said, "Marshal, the end of all our labours is to gain a reputation similar to what you have acquired: it must be pleasant to rest after so many victories *." I am of the same opinion, and think it a great happiness not to be obliged to trust that fame to the capricious power of fortune which a long life has obtained. Marshal Bellefond is gone to La Trape to spend the passion-week; before he went he talked in very high terms to M. de Louvois, about an abatement Louvois wanted to make in his post of general under the prince: he made his majesty the arbitrator, and came off with honour.

The queen constantly attacks me about your children and my journey to Provence; and is not pleased, that your son is like you, and your daughter like her father: I always make the same answer. Mad. Colbert very often talks to me of your beauty; and, indeed, who does not? Do you know, my child, that it is absolutely necessary for you to come and look at us a little here? I will pave the way for you in a manner that shall take all the trouble off your hands. I have spoken to M. de Pomponne about a first president: he says he knows nothing of the matter yet, but believes it will be some stranger.

My aunt is now so ill, that I do not think she will be long a hinderance to me: she is almost suffocated, and swells every day more and more: there is no seeing her without being affected: and I shall be still more deeply

* He was at the head of the king's army in the war of the Fronde, and had even beaten Turenne near Rhetel.

affected with the loss of her: you know how much I always loved her. It would have been a great comfort to me to have left her with some prospect of a cure, that she might have been restored to us again. I will let you know the end of this long and melancholy illness.

M. and mad. de Coulanges are going to Britany. There is no residence for governors now but their governments. We are at the eve of a sharp contest, which gives me concern. Your brother is dear to me: we are very good friends: he has an affection for me, and studies to please me, and I, on my side, am a good step-mother, and busy about his affairs. I should be very unjust, to complain of either of you: you are both of you too good in your several ways. This is all you will have from me to-day, my dear love. I had a Provençal, a Breton, and a Burgundian, at my toilet this morning.

LETTER CXCV.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Wednesday, April 13, 1672.

I MUST own to you, my dear child, that the loss of my letters gives me great uneasiness; but do you know what would give me greater uneasiness? the loss of yours. I have known what it is, nothing can be more painful. But, my dear, I am quite charmed with you; you write Italian like cardinal Ottoboni, and even mix Spanish with it; witness *manera*, which is not a word of ours: and as to your phrases, I am sure I could do nothing like them: amuse yourself also in speaking it; it is a very pretty accomplishment; you pronounce it well, and have time enough upon your hands; so pray go on with it, and let me be agreeably surprised with

finding you an adept at my arrival. You are very good and obedient in not being with child: I thank you for it from the bottom of my heart; take as much care to please me, by avoiding the small-pox. I am frighted at your sun: why it burns people's brains! Apoplexies are as frequent in your country, as the vapours are with us; and I find your head swims sometimes as well as the rest. Madame de Coulanges is in hopes of keeping hers sound at Lyons, and is making great preparation for her defence against the governor *: if she comes to Grignan, it will be to give you an account of her victory, and not to tell you of her defeat; for I do not think the marquis will so much as put on the appearance of the lover; for there are persons who keep a good look out upon him, and are not to be imposed upon. He is almost distracted at not going to the war, as I am at not setting out with M. and mad. de Coulanges; it was a thing fully agreed upon by us all, but for the unhappy condition of my aunt: however, we must have patience; nothing shall stop me, when I am once at liberty. I have just bought a travelling coach, have ordered riding-habits to be made; and, in short, am ready at all points. Never did I long for any thing so much: depend upon it I will not lose a moment. It is my ill-fortune always to meet with disappointments, that befal no one else.

I wish I could send our cardinal to you; his conversation would be a great amusement to you, for you have nothing that I can see to divert you where you are; but instead of the road to Provence, he is going to Commerci. They say that the king a little regrets the departure of Canaples: he had a regiment, and was broken: he applied for ten several abbeys, and was

* The marquis de Villeroi.

refused them all: he desired to serve as aide-de-camp this campaign; he was refused that too: upon which he wrote a letter to his brother, full of the profoundest respect for his majesty, and then went on board the ship of the duke of York *, who has a great regard for him.

The marshal de Gramont was so transported the other day, at a sermon of Bourdaloüe's, that he cried out, in the middle of a passage that struck him, "By God he is right." Madame burst out a laughing, and the sermon was interrupted so long that nobody knew what would be the consequence. If your preachers are as you represent them, I am apt to think they will be in no great danger of their being interrupted by such praises. Farewell, my dearest love: when I think on the countries that separate us, I am almost beside myself, and can have no rest. I am very angry with Adhémar for changing his name †: he shall be called *the little unnatural* ‡.

LETTER CXCVI.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Good-Friday, March 15, 1672.

You are well acquainted with the kind of life I lead, my dear child; to add to which I have the mortification of being separated from you, and of not being able

* Afterwards James II. king of England.

† After the death of the chevalier de Grignan, which happened the 6th February, 1672, M. d'Adhémar took the title of Chevalier de Grignan; but afterwards, upon marrying the youngest daughter of the late marquis of Oraison, of the house of Aqua, he resumed that of Count Adhémar.

‡ Le petit dénaturé.

to fly to you so soon as I could wish: my extreme impatience makes me sometimes afraid that God will, perhaps, never permit me to enjoy the blessing: still, however, I continue my preparations. But is it not barbarous, after all, to consider the death of a person, so dear to me, as the beginning of a journey I wish so ardently? What think you of worldly arrangements? I must own, I am astonished at them: we should profit by those that are displeasing to us, and make use of them as so many penances. Now I am mentioning penances, M. Coulanges says such strange things of those which are practised at Aix, that I think the people must be mad; and I hardly know how to give credit to his account *.

Madame de Coulanges has been at St. Germain and has brought me back a thousand strange stories, that cannot be committed to writing, which make me join in your opinion, upon the horror of infidelity: that part of your letter was very instructive and sensible; but you see every body is not of your way of thinking. Surely, my dear child, you must be in a great rage when your China is not worthy of being sacrificed to your fury, but you must break iron itself. I am really sorry for you when I think that you had nobody by to laugh at you; for in my opinion such a humour kept to one's self, is worse than the small-pox. But how are you off for that now? Is your little one quite safe?

Our cardinal has said a thousand kind things of you this evening; he is going to St. Denis †, to assist at the Easter ceremony; he will return for a short time, and

* The societies of penitents at Aix were wont to have certain processions, which lasted the whole night between Holy Thursday and Good-Friday; but they have been discontinued for some time on account of the indecencies that took place.

† Cardinal de Retz was abbé of St. Denis.

then adieu. Mad. de la Fayette goes to-morrow to a cottage she has near Meudon, where she has been before: she intends to pass a fortnight there, suspended as it were between heaven and earth, and is resolved neither to think, nor speak, nor answer, nor hear: she is quite wearied with saying good-night and good-morning, and has almost every day a slight attack of fever, which a little rest carries off; therefore it is very necessary she should have it: I intend to go to see her. Poor M. de la Rochefoucault is in the old chair you know so well, moped to death: it will not be difficult for you to guess what ails him. I have heard no news to-day. The music at St. Germain is quite divine, which is more than I can say of the singing at the Minims. I was there not long ago, and my little girl with me, who met with a great many of her acquaintance. I love that child too well; but I cannot exactly measure this sort of things: *I had the honour of being your father's servant*; and is not that a sufficient excuse for loving in the same way?

If I do not mention mad. de la Troche to you so frequently as I used to do, it is, that the waves of the sea are not more uncertain than she is in her conduct towards me; she is pleased and displeased ten times in a week. This fickleness of temper makes her company very disagreeable. The preference I give to the Fauxbourg is a point I cannot easily give up: I know myself as much beloved by all there as it is possible to be: I can never come unseasonably; they are of the right stamp; there is nothing contraband; what you see once, you see always: besides, our cardinal frequently meets me there; and what can I do after all this? In a word, I give up the task of pleasing mad. de la Troche, without giving up my regard for her; she will always find me the same, whenever she is disposed to do her-

self justice: I have many good witnesses of my conduct, with respect to her, who all think me right, and sometimes even wonder at my patience. Be sure you do not answer a word to all this; for if she should take it in her head to see one of your letters, and should find any token of disapprobation, all would be over with us. Indeed, she never has seen any of them yet; for there are few persons that I think worthy of seeing them: mad. de Villars is my favourite in that respect. If I were queen of France or of Spain, I should think she was making her court to me; but as it is, I am sure it is from pure regard for you, that she interests herself so much in our correspondence. She is delighted with your remembrance of her: she will not set out so soon as was imagined, for a reason that you may guess, when I tell you, that she cannot go but at the expense of the king her master; and that besides this her assignments are retarded *: however, we declare now, that we have nothing to allege against the Spaniards, as they abide strictly by their treaties. Their ambassador is here, filling our little Minims with his fine liveries. My dear child, I am going to prayers, in order to fit myself for to-morrow's solemnity: I must at least endeavour to preserve that act of my life as free as possible from the imperfections that attend the rest. I love and embrace you: I wish I could feel my heart as warm towards God as it is towards you.

* She was going to the court of Madrid, where her husband was ambassador extraordinary.

LETTER CXCVII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Wednesday, April 30, 1672.

You promise to send me some of the songs they make in Barbary: well, you will not have so much upon your conscience in communicating to me the little scandal that passes at Tunis and Algiers, as I have in furnishing you with all the ill-nature of this place. My dear child, when I reflect, that the Mediterranean is your nearest neighbour, I cannot help feeling my heart quite pained and afflicted. There are certain things in the world that fill us with dread; they teach us nothing new, indeed; but then we see them in a point of view that surprises us.

I saw your three Provençals yesterday; Spinola was one of them; he gave me your letter of the 21st of last month; I will do my best to serve him. I have a great respect for his name: there is a Spinola, who lost one of his hands in a romantic way: he was a second Artaban. Your Spinola showed me a letter in Italian, full of nothing but your praise; I send you a copy of it. I am highly delighted with the apostrophe to the king of France. He tells me that you speak Italian very well; I commend you greatly for it; nothing can be prettier; had I been in a place where I could have had opportunities of speaking it, I should certainly have done so: do not grow tired of it.

I suppose M. d'Usèz has informed you of the conversation he had with the king; nothing could be more desirable than what then passed. The worthy prelate is going to leave us soon; his absence will be a great loss to your affairs here. Madame Brissac makes no

scruple now of receiving the count de Guiche at her house; they are scarcely to be seen any where else: she goes very seldom to M. de la Rochefoucault's; and madame de la Fayette is at her little country-house; so there is very little intimacy between them and the duchess. I had mentioned madame de la Troche to you, at the time you wrote to me about her: now you know the whole affair; however, as she cannot well live without me, she has broken the ice, and is all good humour again. I am very glad of it; for I take things just as they happen: if I had a little more warmth in my temper, I should sometimes be very angry with her. This is just the state you would have me be in, easy and unconcerned at all events: a happy state indeed. But, alas! I am far from enjoying its sweets. You even alarm me, when you seem to wish it. Methinks you are capable of doing whatever you will; and, perhaps, at a time when I feel the most lively tenderness for you, I may, on a sudden, find you quite calm and unmoved. Ah! let me perceive no apathy in you, when I come to Provence. I shall regret my journey, I assure you, if I meet with any of that icy tranquillity. I am now very near my departure; but, alas! my dismission will cost me many tears. My poor aunt is in a most deplorable situation: her swelling increases every day; and she has such racking pains as would rend the hardest heart. Madame de Coulanges took leave of her yesterday with tears in her eyes: though it was not a formal leave, yet, as both she and her husband imagine they shall never see her again, it was very painful to them both. As for me, I pass the most part of the day in sighing by her bedside. I am quite drowned in tears; the caresses and affectionate expressions she bestows on me go to my very soul: she speaks of her death as she would of a journey: she has always had good spirits,

and she keeps them up still. This morning she received the sacrament, as her passport and Easter-offering, and hopes to receive it once more. Her devotion was amazing; we all melted into tears to see her: she was in her chair, for she could not bear the bed: but also afterwards fell upon her knees; and was then the most mournful and affecting spectacle of piety that can be imagined.

I felt real sorrow at parting with M. and madame de Coulanges; they have both a very great [illegible] me; I expect to meet them again at [illegible] going to settle my little household, in hopes of seeing you once more there. It is said that La Brune (madame de Coëtquen) has resumed the thread of her story with the chevalier de Lorraine, and that they talked very much of the fête given by the duke, and of their waiting so scrupulously till the clock struck twelve on Palm-Sunday before they would eat meat. Every one's time now is employed in taking leave of his friends: every body is in a hurry; every body is setting out. The countess of Lude is come hither post to take leave of her husband; she goes back again in a week, after she has held his stirrup, and sent him off to the army with the rest. All here tremble for their friends.

I passed my Palm-Sunday at St. Mary's, in my usual way. Barillon has made a long stay here; but he is going away at last, as you have ordered him to attend his duty. Your example leaves him not a word to say: he will have a fine place of it; it will cost him at least 50,000 francs for his table; but he knows where to get them *. Madame de C . . . . is certainly mad; at least we think so here. What a whim, to wander about Italy like an unfortunate princess, when she might return home and live sociably with her mother, who

* M. Barillon was ambassador to the English court.

adores her, and whose greatest affliction is the foolish conduct of her daughter! and reason enough she has to be afflicted, for in my life I never met with any thing so ridiculous. We do not know whether La Marans is employed above or below ground; she seldom sees her son *, or mad. de la Fayette, and then stays but for a moment, and away again with mad. de Schomberg, who comes to take her up: it is very vexatious not to be carried back by mad. de Sévigné: she does not at all [illegible] me.

Is your [illegible] boy really become brown? I thought you said he was fair; to me you always boasted of him as such: but, seriously, is he brown? Do you not jest with me? I have a great mind to tell you, that your girl is fair; but be it as it will, all your children carry the mark of the workman about them.

The little Du Bois † is gone to attend M. de Louvois ‡, and I begin already to feel his absence. I went yesterday to the post-office to endeavour to make friends there, or see if Du Bois had not recommended me to somebody; but they were all new faces, and did not seem to think me of any great consequence. I begged of them to let my letters be put by themselves, and I would send in the morning, which I did not fail to do; but they sent me word that there was none for me. I am fallen from the clouds! I cannot live without a letter from you; perhaps, you may have directed them under cover to somebody in the neighbourhood, and they will be sent me to-morrow. I wish it may be so, and that I may be able to place our correspondence, as to post, upon the same footing as before.

* M. de la Rochefoucault.

† The post-master whom mad. de Sévigné had engaged in her interest to facilitate the correspondence between her daughter and her.

‡ Post-master general and secretary of war.

LETTER CXCVIII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, April [illegible]

I RECEIVED your letter of the 13th instant, [illegible]y when it was too late to answer it; I [illegible] all the care I had taken about the post [illegible] to the carelessness of the clerks, whic[illegible] apprehended. I shall use all my en[illegible] some new friend at the post-office; b[illegible] much rather be off, if my poor aunt w[illegible] cruel to say this; but it is no less cruel to find duty thus bar my way, when I was ready to come to you. My present situation is far from being agreeable.

I am very impatient to know what passed in your journey to St. Baume*: it is your *Nôtre Dame des Anges*. The marquis de Vince, who is extremely obliging and civil to me, has given me a frightful description of the way to it. He has lost his eldest son lately: I really pity the poor man; for very often the tears would start from his eyes, if he did not struggle with himself to repress them: he appears to be very warm in your interests.

I have been with the cardinal to see madame de la Fayette: we found her better than she was at Paris. We had a great deal of conversation about you. He is to leave us next Monday, and will bid you adieu as he bid you welcome. He loves you sincerely; and you may be sure of his answer to the proposal concerning

* Sainte Baume is a large grotto cut out in the solid rock, where, by tradition of the country, but without any reasonable foundation, it is said, that St. Mary Magdalen retired, to finish her days in penitence and mortification.

his being archbishop of Aix. We were laying down the life he would lead, divided between the desire of seeing you, and the fear of making himself ridiculous: we regulated the hours, and fixed the punishments for the first who should presume to make any remarks upon his attachment to you. This conversation had like to have carried us beyond Fleuri*. D'Hacqueville, and the a[illegible], were with us, and I was in great state [illegible] three men.

—I [illegible] take a walk for three or four hours at Livri: I [illegible]y melancholy, and cannot give vent to my sadness here: I will try what the verdure of the spring, and the music of the nightingales, can do towards restoring the tranquillity of my mind. There is nothing to be seen here, but persons taking leave of one another, and there is no passing in the streets for waggons and equipages. I shall return here to-morrow to send off my son's; but that I shall do with very little trouble, for they are only chests that can be taken by porters. He bought all his horses in Germany: I shall take care to supply him with money during the campaign. Yesterday I took my leave of the *little unnatural*†: I could hardly forbear weeping. This campaign will be a warm one, and I have no great dependence on his care of himself. *Poco duri purche m'inalzi* ‡, must be his device after all. Adieu, my dear, I shall say no more to you at present. I am going to St. Baume; that is, I am going to a place where I shall do nothing but think of you, and, perhaps, too affectionately. It will be very difficult for me to behold the gardens, the walks, the little bridge, the avenue, the

* The name of the country-seat where mad. de la Fayette was at that time.

† The chevalier de Grignan.

‡ Though short my duration, let me rise.

field, the mill, the prospect, the wood, &c. without thinking of my beloved child.

Little Daquin is appointed first physician to the king: so you see that favour can do as much as merit †.

LETTER * CXCI[illegible]

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO THE [illegible]

You must know I did not receive your letter of the nineteenth of March, which you sent by the honest tradesman who gives long credit and seldom duns, till yesterday. Would to God we could find tradesmen of the same description here! but these sort of folks have become sad plagues for a long time. Every body knows that what I say is true. We are all in despair; we have not a farthing in our purse, we have no means of borrowing, our tenants do not pay, and we dare not coin, because we do not wish to be sent to the devil; yet all the world is going to the army with an equipage. It is not easy to tell you how this is contrived. The miracle of the loaves and fishes is no longer a wonder. I think you are happy in your misfortune, in being exempt from joining the army. I should be grieved, if the only favour you had obtained for so long a period was that of standing the chance of being killed. It is enough that the king knows your good intentions.

† Valot, who succeeded Daquin, and who was a still worse physician, obtained his place by means of a gift of fifty thousand crowns to cardinal Mazarin. It was this Valot whom Guy Patin named *Gargantua*, because he killed a rich financier of the name of Gargan. He was also very near killing Louis XIV. in 1658. Never were there so many ignorant physicians as at that period, and particularly for those who were called the great world.

When he wants you, he knows where to find you; and as nothing escapes his memory, he will not perhaps forget the services you have rendered him. In the mean time, enjoy the pleasure of being the only man of your rank who can boast of having bread to eat.

I believe I have before given you my opinion of some of your letters to the king: they delight me. I saw a young [redacted] at the college of Clermont, who was worthy of b[redacted]on. I made him a short visit, and I intend [redacted] to invite him to dinner. I supped the other even[redacted] with Manicamp and his sister, the maréchale d'Estrées. She told me she should go to the college to see our Rabutin. We talked a good deal about you. As for Manicamp and myself, whenever we meet, we do not fail to introduce you in some way or other; we regret you, think no one equal to you, and each repeats to the other some witticism of yours: in short, you ought to be very much pleased with us. I do not know whether you have heard that the marshals d'Humières and de Bellefond are exiled, for having refused to obey M. de Turenne when the army shall have joined.

LETTER CC.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO MADAME DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Wednesday, April 27, 1672.

I SHALL answer your two letters, and then give you some news from hence. Monsieur de Pomponne saw the first letter, and I intend to show him the greater part of the second; he is gone: it was in taking leave of him before his departure, that I showed it him; for it was impossible to say any thing better,

than what you wrote concerning your affairs: he admires you extremely. I dare not tell you to what he compares your style: he was charmed with your description of St. Baume; and will, I am sure, be much more so with your second letter. The bishop * takes every opportunity of expressing his desire to be reconciled to you: as he finds matters in such a train here, as to make such a reconciliation his interest, [illegible] willing to do himself the credit of an incli[illegible]table to his character and profession. It is [illegible]hat in a few days there will be a first presiden[illegible]pointed for you †. I am extremely obliged to you for your lively description of St. Baume, but it will not in the least diminish my desire of seeing that hideous grotto. The greater the difficulty in getting to it, the greater will be my inclination to go; but after all, I do not much care about it, for you are the only thing I seek in Provence: when I have you, I shall be in possession of all I wish for. My poor aunt continues extremely ill: I say a thousand kind things to her in your name, which she receives with pleasure. M. de la Trousse writes her the finest things imaginable; I have no idea of these professions to the dying. If love for me were to begin at such a time, I had as lief be without it. We should show our love during life, and endeavour, as you, my dear child, know so well how to do, to make it pleasant and happy, instead of heaping on those who love us sorrow and vexation; it is rather too late to change when our friends are dying. You know how I have always laughed at what is called being good-heart-

* The bishop of Marseilles, between whom and the Grignan family there had been a dispute.

† For Provence, vacant by the death of monsieur d'Opéde.

ed at bottom: I know but one sort of good-heartedness; it is yours, and is sufficient to satisfy the most scrupulous.

I shall send madame de Coulanges that part of my letter which belongs to her; that dear letter must be cut into a thousand pieces; however, I shall have a few hundreds to my own share to comfort myself with: all dear, all charming as these letters are, shall I tell you, my lovely child, that I heartily wish to receive no more of them? But now for news.

The king sets out to-morrow: there will be a hundred thousand men the less in Paris, according to the best calculations, from the different quarters of the city: for the last four days, I have done nothing but take leave. I was yesterday at the citadel, to bid adieu to the grand-master *, but I did not find him there: however, I found La Troche there weeping for her son, and the countess † weeping for her husband: she had a grey hat on, in which, in the excess of her grief, she buried her face: it was an odd sight. I believe there are very few instances of hats being seen on such occasions; I think I would for once, at least, have put on a cap or a hood. They both set out this morning, the wife to the family-seat, and the husband to the war: good heavens, what a war! it is likely to be the most sanguinary and fatal one that has taken place since the passage of Charles VIII. into Italy; and so the king has been told.

The Issel ‡ is defended with twelve hundred pieces of

* The count de Lude, grand-master of the ordnance.

† Renée Eleonore Bouhé, first wife to the count de Lude, was a great huntress, and dressed on those occasions like a man: she spent the greater part of her life in the country, following the diversions of the field.

‡ According to the Dutch pronunciation, the Scheld.

cannon, and 60,000 infantry, besides three towns, an a large river, on this side of it. The count de Guiche, who knows the country, showed us a map of it at madame de Verneuil's; it is an astonishing enterprise; the prince of Condé is very much occupied with it. The other day a pleasant sort of a fellow came to him to say he knew a secret to furnish him with money. "My friend," said he, "I thank thee; but if that any invention by which we may pass the Rhine without being knocked on the head, thou wilt oblige me by communicating it, for I know of none." The lieutenant-general were the marshals d'Hu[illegible] and de Bellefond, of whom I have some particulars to give which you ought to be informed of. The two armies are to join; the king will command monsieur*, monsieur the prince†, the prince M. de Turenne, and de Turenne the two marshals, and even the army of M. de Crequi. The king mentioned this to the marshal de Bellefond, and told him, that it was his will he should obey M. de Turenne, without considering his rank. The marshal, without taking time to reflect of it, (this was his fault) replied, that he should not be worthy of the honour his majesty had conferred on him, if he disgraced himself by an obedience that had no example. The king, with much good nature, desired him to retract the answer he had made; and told him that he wished it from a feeling of friendship, as his disgrace would be the consequence of his refusal. The marshal replied, that he saw he should lose the happiness of his majesty's favour, and ruin his own fortune; but this appeared to him more eligible, than to forfeit his esteem; and that he could not obey M. de Turenne, without disho-

* The duke of Orleans, the king's brother.

† The prince de Condé.

nouring the dignity, to which he had raised him. "Then," said the king, "we must part:" the marshal made a very low bow, and took his leave. M. de Louvois, who does not love him, immediately sent him an order to go to Tours. His name is erased out of the list of the king's household: he is in debt fifty thousand crowns more than all his estate is worth: he is utterly ruined; but he is contented. It is believed he will retire to La Trappe. He offered his equipage, which was made at the king's expense, to his majesty, to be disposed of as he pleased. This was interpreted as a design to affront the king, though nothing could be more innocent. His friends and relations, and all who have any attachment to him, are inconsolable: madame de Villars * is so likewise. Do not fail to write to her, and to the poor marshal. The marshal d'Humières, who was supported by M. de Louvois, had not appeared at court since, and waited till the marshal de Crequi had given his answer. He came post from the army to give it himself: he arrived yesterday, and had a conversation of an hour with the king. The marshal de Grammont was called in, who maintained the rights of the marshals of France, and desired the king to judge who did the greatest honour to that dignity; they who, to support his grandeur, exposed themselves to the danger of disobliging his majesty; or he who was ashamed to bear that title, who had effaced it out of every place where it was found, who esteemed the name of marshal as an injury to him, and who affected to command in quality of a prince. The end of all this is, that the marshal de Crequi is gone to his country-house to plant cabbages, as well as marshal d'Humières.

This is at present the only subject of conversation.

* She was a Bellefond, and was aunt to the marshal.

It is much disputed whether they did well or ill: their partisans on both sides are warm in the debate. The countess * has talked herself into a sore throat, and the count de Guiche is so hoarse he cannot speak: the debate between them grew into a perfect comedy; it was necessary to separate them. The truth is, these are three men of great importance in carrying on the war, and it will be difficult to supply their places. The prince is very much concerned at losing them, thinking the king's interest must suffer by it. Mons. de Schomberg, having commanded armies in chief, is likewise unwilling to obey M. de Turenne. In a word, France, though it abounds so much in great generals, will scarcely find one who will accept of employment in consequence of this unhappy misunderstanding.

M. d'Aligre has the seals; he is fourscore years of age; they are only deposited with him. He is chosen, like a pope, merely with a view to a quick succession.

I have just been making the tour of the city. I have been with M. de la Rochefoucault; he is oppressed with grief upon taking leave of his sons; but in the midst of this concern, he begs me to say a thousand tender things to you from him. We have had much conversation on this melancholy occasion. All the world is in tears, for their sons, their brothers, their husbands, or their lovers. He must be of a miserably selfish temper who is not deeply interested in the departure, as it were, of the whole kingdom. Dangeau and the count de Sault † came to bid us adieu. They informed us, that the king, instead of setting out to-morrow, as it was believed he would, in order to prevent the effusion of tears, went this morning at ten, without letting his in-

* Madame de Fiesque, who always went by the name of *the countess*.

† Afterwards duke de les Diguières.

tention be known. He had a suite of twelve only with him; the rest will follow. Instead of going to Villers-Coterets, he is gone to Nanteuil, where it is thought that others who have disappeared of late * will meet him. To-morrow he is to go to Soissons, and afterwards will pursue the route that was first resolved on. If you do not think this gallant, you have only to say so. The universal melancholy that reigns there, is beyond imagination. The queen remains in quality of regent: all the principal companies have been to pay their compliments to her. This is a strange war, and begins dismally.

On my return hither, I found our good cardinal, who came to bid me adieu: we talked an hour together; he has written you a little valedictory epistle, and he sets out to-morrow. M. d'Usèz is going away too: who is it that is not leaving Paris? alas! it is I only; but I shall have my turn as well as others. I approve your Monaco excursion. It is true, as you say, that it is a cruel thing to take a journey of two hundred leagues, and at the end of it to find oneself at Aix: but this jaunt will suit the delay of my own journey. I shall arrive perhaps at Grignan nearly as soon as you.

I beg, my dearest child, that you will let me hear from you regularly. I am like a lost creature without your letters.

* The duchess de la Vallière.

LETTER CCI.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, April 29, 1672.

MONSIEUR d'Usèz went this morning; I took my leave of him with the concern that is natural on losing a person so useful and friendly as he has been in your affairs; I am sensible of his merit, and love and honour him exceedingly. I hope for the pleasure of seeing him again in Provence: you ought in all things implicitly to follow his advice; he knows how matters go here, and will on every proper occasion stand up for the honour of M. de Grignan. I have written to M. de Pomponne, and did not fail to enclose two sides of your letter; nothing can be added to what you have said. Had I attempted to copy it, I know I should have heightened some expressions, or rather indeed have lowered them, which would have robbed them of half their strength: I have seconded your letter by one of my own, wherein I desire him to observe the turn they have given to this business, and in what a fawning artful manner they strive to cloak their insatiable desire of crossing M. de Grignan in all his undertakings. I am sure this will have a favourable effect on M. de Pomponne, for it is directly contrary to the proceedings of honest and upright men. When I lay hold of a circumstance of this nature, I know very well how to place it in its proper light, and make it properly estimated: I expect his answer with impatience.

Our cardinal set off yesterday. There is not now a single man of quality in Paris: they are all gone with the king, or to their respective governments, or else into the country; of the latter, however, there are but

few. I think M. de S*** † has much greater courage than those who are to pass the Issel: he, though young, rich, and in full health, has been able to see every man of merit and fortune join the army, with as much indifference about following them, as if they had been going on a party to pick shells; I did not say a hunting-party, for then he would infallibly have followed them: he is going very peaceably down to St. Tayau, where he will remain during the summer: he is infinitely wiser than the rest, who blindly follow opinion, *la regina del monde*. It is certainly better to be a philosopher, and pass one's life in ease and tranquillity, than to be exposed to perpetual dangers, and lead a life of toil and hazard for a mere phantom: thus judiciously argues M. de S***.

Every body is sad and out of spirits; not a day passes without seeing some or other of one's relations going to expose themselves to the most imminent danger. This is a heart-breaking reflection. The king himself was not exempt from this weakness, in this sudden departure. It is positively asserted, that he was received by some certain persons at Nanteuil, who are not to return very speedily to St. Germain, on account of a little business they have to transact two or three months hence, which will be best done at a country-house ‡.

The king is much less incensed against M. de Crequi than against the two others; because he gave his reasons in a very proper manner. Marshal Bellefond answered too drily, too cavalierly. We should not forget what is necessary on such occasions.

You are now on your journey, my dear; you can-

† By the letter of the 16th of May following, it is plain that M. de Sully is the person alluded to.

‡ Madame de Montespan, who was near her confinement, is probably alluded to here.

not do any thing better at present; we are not always in a situation, or in a humour, to travel. If you were less adventurous, I should be happier; but you love to attempt uncommon exploits, and go where wheel has never passed before; this gives me uneasiness. Take my advice, my child, and do not force nature; but ride on horseback, or be carried in a litter, like other people. Consider what it is to have an arm, leg, or neck, broken. Write to me as often as you can, especially from Monaco.

I am on very good terms with the count de Guiche; I have seen him several times at M. de la Rochefoucault's, and at the hôtel de Sully: he always attacks me; he fancies I have wit; we have chatted and jested a good deal with one another. He has told me how dreadfully his sister * has been maimed by having been bled unskilfully, and the account has excited my compassion and alarm. I have never seen him with his *Chimene* †; they are personages so exactly formed upon the model of an old romance, that no one suspects them of indelicacy in their passion, and it is thought they have good reasons to observe inviolably the laws of honour.

It is two months since La Marans has seen *her son* ‡; he has no very high opinion of her. Shall I tell you what she said the other day? Her sayings, you know, are often extraordinary. She declared that for her part, she had rather die than grant favours to a man she loved; but if she found a man that loved her, and who was not perfectly disagreeable, and that she was entirely free

* Madame de Monaco.

† Madame de Brissac.

‡ Monsieur de la Rochefoucault is the person always meant in these letters by the son of madame de Marans, that lady always calling him *son*, and he styling her *mother*.

from passion for him, she might perhaps prevail with herself to venture on a little compliance. Her son preserves in his memory this virtuous resolution of hers, and makes it an infallible rule, by which to judge of her intrigues. He told her he approved of this distinction the more, because it was delicate and new; he had before conversed only with women of such gross minds, that they could not discern the one from the other, but always confounded the man that was loved, with him that was favoured: but that it was agreeable to her nicer taste, to reform these old maxims, which were not to be compared with the refined sentiments she endeavoured to introduce. It is pleasant to hear his reflections on this subject. Since he has had this key to his mother's behaviour, he has lost sight of her, but he draws his own consequences without any difficulty.

Friday night.

I saw madame du Plessis Belliere two hours ago; she related to me the conversation between the king and the marshal de Crequi *. It was long, earnest, affecting, and rational. If he had been the first to speak, the affair would doubtless have terminated happily; he proposed five or six expedients which might have been received, had not the king made it a law to himself not to yield to any accommodation. The marshal de Bellefond has spoiled all. M. de la Rochefoucault says, it is because he is unyielding, and that his mind does not easily dove-tail itself with the sentiments of others. The marshal de Crequi said to the king in despair, "Sire, take from me the marshal's staff; that may be done at your pleasure: let me serve this campaign

* The marshal de Crequi was son-in-law to madame du Plessis Belliere.

simply as marquis de Crequi; perhaps I may deserve to have it restored to me again at the end of the war." The king was affected at the situation in which he saw him, and as he went out of the cabinet, in an agony of grief, scarcely knowing any one he met, he said to the marshal de Villeroy, "Follow the marshal de Crequi; he is almost beside himself." He spoke of him with esteem, and without resentment, and has made his company of guards serve in the army. The marshal is gone to his house at Marines near Pontoise, with his wife and children. The marshal d'Humières is gone to Angers. This, my dear child, has been the only subject of conversation here for these four days. There is not a soul of any fashion left in Paris.

Voici votre tour,
Venez, messieurs de la ville!
Parlez nous d'amour;
Mais jusqu'à leur retour *.

My aunt is somewhat better than she was; so that we are resolved to set out about the middle or end of May. In the mean time, I shall carefully inform you of every thing that passes. Adieu, my dearest child, I am yours without reserve or limitation.

* Now, now is your time, come, each smart powder'd cit,
And make your approaches, and sigh at our feet:
We permit you to tell with what passion you burn;
But, hark ye! 'tis only till they can return.

LETTER CCII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Wednesday, May 4, 1672.

It is impossible, my dear child, to tell you how much I pity, how much I praise, and how much I admire you: thus I divide my discourse into three heads. First, *I pity you* in being so subject to the vapours and low spirits, as they will certainly do you much harm. Secondly, *I praise you* for subduing them when there is occasion, especially on M. de Grignan's account, whom they must make very uneasy; it is a pleasing proof of the regard and consideration you have for him. Thirdly, and lastly, *I admire you* for suppressing your natural inclination, to appear what you are not: this is really heroic, and the fruit of your philosophy: you have ample matter in yourself to call it into exercise. We were saying the other day, that there is no real evil in life, except great pain; all the rest is merely imaginary, and depends on the light in which we view things. All other evils are curable either by time, moderation in our wishes, or strength of mind; and may be lightened by reflection, religion, or philosophy. But pain tyrannises over both soul and body. Confidence in God may indeed enable us to bear it with patience, and turn it to our advantage, but it will not diminish it.

This seems to savour of the Fauxbourg Saint Germain *, but it comes from my poor aunt's apartment, where I was the leader of the conversation. The subject arose naturally from her extreme sufferings, which,

* That is, from madame de la Fayette's, at whose house M. de Rochefoucault, and some of the most select company in Paris, used to meet.

she maintains, are infinitely superior to every evil that life is subject to. M. de la Rochefoucault is of the same opinion: he is still tormented with the gout; he has lost his true mother *, and he lamented her death so tenderly and affectionately, that I almost adored him: she was a woman of extraordinary merit, and was the only person in the world, he said, who was unchangeable in her love to him. Fail not to write to him, both you and M. de Grignan. M. de la Rochefoucault's affection for his family is unparalleled: he maintains that it is one of the chains that attach us to one another. We have discovered, and related, and reconciled, many things relative to his foolish mother *(madame de Marans)*, which explain to us clearly what you once said, that it was not what we thought, but quite another thing: yes truly it was quite another thing, or perhaps better still, it was this and that too; one was without prejudice to the other: she wedded the lute to the voice, and spiritual things to coarseness and indelicacy. My child, we have found a good vein, and one which explains the mystery of a quarrel you once had in the council-chamber of madame de la Fayette: I will tell you the rest in Provence.

My aunt is in a state which does not seem likely to terminate. Your journey is exceedingly well-timed, perhaps ours may tally with it. We have a great desire to pass some part of our Whitsuntide on the road, either at Moulins or at Lyons. The abbé wishes it no less than myself. There is not a man of quality (of the sword I mean) in Paris. I went on Sunday to hear mass at the Minims. "We shall find our poor Minims quite deserted," said I to mademoiselle de la Trousse, "we shall not find a creature there, except the marquis d'Al-

* Gabrielle du Plessis Liancourt.

luye *." Well, we went into the church, where the first and only creature we saw was the marquis d'Alluye: I could not help laughing till I fairly cried at the oddity of the thing; in short, he is left behind, and is going to his government on the sea-coast. The coast must be guarded, you know.

The lover of her whom you style *the incomparable* †, did not meet her at the first stage, but on the road, in a house of Sanguin's, a little beyond that which you know: he remained there two hours, it is thought he then saw the children for the first time. The fair one stays there attended by a guard, and a female friend; she is to be there for four or five months. Madame de la Vallière is at St. Germain's: madame de Thianges is here with her father; I saw her daughter the other day, she is beautiful beyond all imagination. Some people pretend that the king went straight to Nanteuil, but it is certain that the fair one is at the house called Genitoi. I tell you nothing but the truth; there is nothing I have a greater aversion and contempt for than idle stories.

You have taken your departure then, my dear; well, I will live in the hope of hearing from you at every stage. I shall not be behindhand on my side. I have managed so well as to find a friend at the post-office, who is very careful of our letters. I have for these several days past been occupied in adorning my cottage; Saint Aubin has effected wonders. I shall sleep there to-morrow. I swear to you that the reason I like it so well, is because it is intended for you. You will be very well accommodated in my apartment, and I shall not be less so. I will tell you how charmingly every thing is contrived. I am extremely uneasy about your poor

* Paul d'Escoubleau, marquis d'Alluye and de Sourdis, governor of the city and country of Orleans, and of the Pays Chartrain.

† The king and madame de Montespan.

brother; this terrible war makes us tremble for those we love: whenever I think of it, it fills me with horror; but then again, I comfort myself with the thought that it may not be so bad as I apprehend, for I have remarked that things seldom happen as we expect them to do.

Pray let me know what has happened between the princess Harcourt and you *. Brancas is dreadfully chagrined that you do not love his daughter. M. d'Usèz has promised to re-establish peace between all parties: I should be glad to know what has occasioned the coolness between you.

You tell me of your son, that his beauty grows less, and his merit increases; I am sorry for the loss of his beauty, and I am rejoiced to find that he loves wine; this is a little spice of Britany and Burgundy together, which will produce a charming effect with the prudence of the Grignans. As for your daughter, she is quite the reverse; her beauty increases, and her merit lessen. I assure you, she is very pretty, but as obstinate as a demon; she has her little wills, and little designs of her own; she diverts us extremely; she has a beautiful complexion, blue eyes, black hair, a nose neither handsome nor ugly; her chin, her cheeks, and the turn of her face, are faultless. I shall say nothing of her mouth, it will do very well. She has a very sweet voice: madame de Coulanges thinks it suits her mouth admirably.

I fancy, my dear child, that I shall at last be a convert to your opinion. I meet with vexations in life that are insupportable, and find, notwithstanding my fine reasoning at the beginning of this letter, there are many evils which, though less severe than bodily pain, are nevertheless equally to be dreaded. I meet with

* Frances de Brancas, wife of Alphonso Henry Chartres, of Lorrain, prince of Harcourt; and daughter of Charles de Brancas, gentleman of honour to queen Anne of Austria.

such frequent disappointments, that I think with you, that life is very disobliging.

When the chevalier de Lorraine went away, he was making love to the angel *, and Monsieur seemed to approve of it. Madame de Coëtquen † has not been able, they say, to resume the thread of her discourse: madame de Rohan has resigned; she, and her whole family, are lodged at the hôtel de Vitri. I expect letters from M. de Pomponne: we, that is, you, have no first president yet.

LETTER CCIII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, May 6, 1672.

My dear child, I must return to narration, it is a folly I can never resist. Prepare, therefore, for a description. I was yesterday at a service performed in honour of the chancellor Seguier ‡, at the Oratory.. Painting, sculpture, music, rhetoric, in a word, the four liberal arts were at the expense of it. Nothing could exceed the beauty of the decorations: they were finely imagined, and designed by Le Brun. The mausoleum reached to the top of the dome, adorned with a thousand lamps, and a variety of figures characteristic of him in whose honour it was erected. Beneath were four figures of Death,

* Louisa-Elizabeth Rouxel, daughter to marshal de Grancia.

† It is well known that she was his mistress at the time Turenne was making love to her; and that, having confided to her the secret of Madame's voyage to England, she told it to the chevalier, who did not fail to tell Monsieur of it, and Monsieur immediately informed the king that he was acquainted with the circumstance. Louis XIV. disconcerted Turenne extremely, by informing him at the same time that his secret was betrayed, and his mistress unfaithful.

‡ Peter Seguier, who died the 28th of January, 1672.

bearing the marks of his several dignities, as having taken away his honours with his life. One of them held his helmet; another his ducal coronet, another the ensigns of his order, another his chancellor's mace. The four sister arts, painting, music, eloquence, and sculpture, were represented in deep distress, bewailing the loss of their protector. The first representation was supported by the four virtues, fortitude, temperance, justice, and religion. Above these, four angels, or genii, received the soul of the deceased, and seemed pruning their purple wings to bear their precious charge to heaven. The mausoleum was adorned with a variety of little seraphs, who supported an illuminated shrine, which was fixed to the top of the cupola. Nothing so magnificent or so well imagined was ever seen; it is Le Brun's master-piece. The whole church was adorned with pictures, devices, and emblems, which all bore some relation to the life, or office, of the chancellor; and some of his noblest actions were represented in painting. Madame de Vernueil * offered to purchase all this decoration at a great price; but it was unanimously resolved by those who had contributed to it, to adorn a gallery with it, and to consecrate it as an everlasting monument of their gratitude and magnificence. The assembly was grand and numerous, but without confusion. I sat next to Monsieur de Tulle †, madame Colbert and the duke of Monmouth, who is as handsome as when we saw him at the palais royal. (Let me tell you in a parenthesis, that he is going to the army to join the king). A young father of the Oratory came to speak the funeral oration. I desired Monsieur

* Charlotte de Seguier, his daughter, married, 1st, Maximilian de Bethune, duke de Sully, and, 2dly, Henry de Bourbon, duke de Verneuil.

† Julius Mascaron, bishop of Tulle, a celebrated preacher.

de Tulle to bid him come down, and to mount the pulpit in his place; since nothing could sustain the beauty of the spectacle, and the excellence of the music, but the force of his eloquence. My child, this young man trembled when he began, and we all trembled for him. Our ears were at first struck with a provincial accent; he is of Marseilles, and is called Lené. But as he recovered from his confusion, he became so brilliant; established himself so well; gave so just a measure of praise to the deceased; touched with so much address and delicacy all the passages in his life where delicacy was required; placed in so true a light all that was most worthy of admiration; employed all the charms of expression, all the masterly strokes of eloquence, with so much propriety and so much grace, that every one present, without exception, burst into applause, charmed with so perfect, so finished a performance. He is twenty-eight years of age, the intimate friend of M. de Tulle, who accompanied him when he left the assembly. We were for naming him the chevalier Mascaron, and I think he will even surpass his friend. As for the music, it was fine beyond all description. Baptiste* exerted himself to the utmost, and was assisted by all the king's musicians. There was an addition made to that fine *Miserere;* and there was a *Libera,* which filled the eyes of the whole assembly with tears: I do not think the music in heaven could exceed it. There were several prelates present. I desired Guitaut to look for the good bishop of Marseilles, but we could not see him. I whispered him, that if it had been the funeral oration of any person living, to whom he might have made his court by it, he would not have failed to have been there.

Lully.

This little pleasantry made us laugh, in spite of the solemnity of the ceremony. My dear child, what a strange letter is this? I fancy I have almost lost my senses! What is this long account to you? To tell you the truth, I have satisfied my love of description.

The king is at Charleroi, and will make a pretty long stay there. There is no forage yet to be found, and his numerous train carries famine with it wherever he goes. They are embarrassed at the outset of the campaign. Guitaut showed your letter to me and the abbé; the burthen of it is very obliging *(Envoyez moi ma mère*)*. How amiable you are, my child! and how agreeably do you justify the unbounded affection I bear you! Alas! I think of nothing but my journey; leave the arrangement to me: I will conduct every thing; and if my aunt continues to spin out the poor remains of life to any great length, I shall certainly set out; you are the only person in the world who could induce me to leave her in so pitiable a situation. I am every moment thinking of my departure, but have not courage to fix the day. To-day my journey is concluded on; to-morrow I am irresolute. What you say, my dear, is true; there are events in life, which are very disobliging. You beg me not to think of you in changing my house, and I beg you to believe that I think of nothing else; and that you are so dear to me, that you occupy my whole heart. I shall go to-morrow and sleep in that delightful apartment, where you may be accommodated without displacing me. Adieu, my beautiful love, you are at present a traveller, exposed to the wide world; I fear your adventurous humour. I can neither trust to you, nor to M. de Grignan. It is, as

* Send me my mother.

you say, a strange thing to find one's self at Aix, after having gone two hundred leagues; and at St. Pilon *, after having climbed so high. Your letters sometimes contain very pleasant passages, but sometimes sentences which escape you, as obscure as those of Tacitus. I stumbled upon this comparison, and it is a very just one. I embrace Grignan, and kiss his right cheek, beneath the little tufted mole.

LETTER CCIV.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, May 13, 1672.

It is certain, that the extreme beauty of Livri would be capable of giving joy to my heart, if I were not overwhelmed with grief at the melancholy situation in which I see my poor aunt, and with a perpetual desire of setting out; joined to these, the illness of madame de la Fayette distresses me. After having been in the country for upwards of a month, taking every necessary precaution, as she thought, against her disorder, and returning to all appearance as sound as a roach; she was attacked a day or two after her arrival, with an ague fit, attended with fever and delirium: this has reduced her to a worse extremity than ever, and cannot fail in the end to carry her off. But her disorder, violent as it is, does not shock me so much as my aunt's: it is that which distracts me, by being a continual obstacle to my darling object. But trust to me; leave me to myself. I shall not go to Provence for a long time, if I do not

* St. Pilon is a chapel in the form of a dome, built upon the point of the rock of Sainte Baume. It is only to be attained with infinite labour, and by a road cut in the mountain.

go this year: though you may be on the point of leaving it when I arrive, yet you must suffer me to see it; and if the presence of the abbé can be of service to you in your affairs, take advantage of his kind offer: many things may be done in little time: pity our impatience, help us to bear it, and be assured we shall not lose a single moment in setting out, even though we may in some respects be deficient in courtesy. The multiplicity of my duties destroys me: what I do is too much for me, and whatever I omit vexes me. Spring, which used to give me new life, is no longer spring to me. *Alas! these fine days are not made for me,* is still the burthen of my song. I just continue, however, to keep my soul in my body.

I can easily comprehend your desire to see Livri. I hope you will enjoy it in your turn. I suppose M. d'Usèz has told you that the king has made a law with himself to grant no indulgences of absence, but you may at least enjoy it, if it please God, during the life of the abbé. I asked a person the other day, to describe to me what sort of spring yours is, and where your nightingales perch themselves to sing. I find there is nothing for them but rocks or frightful precipices of stone, or else orange-groves or olive-trees, and they do not like such bitter things: pray tell me something to retrieve the honour of your country.

I approve your journey highly. I am certain it must be very amusing; the sound of the cannon has something in it that appears to accord with your grandeur and dignity: there is also something romantic in being received like a princess wherever you go; indeed you want now and then a stranger or wandering prince to grace your history; I fancy you have not many of those; however, this is a circumstance of no great im-

portance. You must tell me who accompanies you in this little excursion. Mons. de Martel * has written that he will receive you like a queen of France. I cannot but admire the general of the galleys †, and his curious passion; he will not be put to much difficulty to play the speechless and expiring lover; at least if he is as corpulent as you represent him, he may easily die of suffocation at his mistress's feet. It seems to me that you are on better terms together than you formerly were. At Marseilles, I understand, he is passionately in love with me.

Your letters are sent very regularly: you may write oftener without fearing to inconvenience me. If you were good, you would have told me the history of your uneasiness the other day: I have puzzled myself in vain to find out the cause. Your last letter makes me think you have enemies, but I cannot conceive who they can be. La Marans has other things to think of: you are at a distance from her, and cannot annoy her in any way. Besides, her sort of malice does not extend to things where care and application are necessary: you ought however to give me full information upon the subject. But, good God! what can they say of you? I cannot be uneasy at it, persuaded as I am, that falsehood soon dies. If you had chosen, my dear child, you could have informed me better than you have done.

Monsieur de Turenne is set out from Charleroi, at the head of twenty thousand men; his destination is a secret. My son is still in Germany. We shall now be in continual apprehension of hearing from the army. It is feared that De Ruyter ‡, who is the greatest naval

* General of the marine at Toulon.

† Louis-Victor Rochechouart, duke de Vivonne.

‡ The Dutch admiral.

commander in the world, has engaged and defeated count d'Estrées in the channel. We know very little news here: it is said the king has forbidden any to be published: it is to be hoped, however, he will not conceal his victories from us.

La Troche, the abbé Arnauld, and M. de Varenne, dined with me yesterday in my cottage, which I love, because it was built only for the pleasure of seeing you both there. Since I began this letter, I have seen Marseilles*; he appears as mild as a lamb; we did not engage in any controversy, but talked of the wonders that M. d'Usèz and I intended to perform, to bring about a lasting peace. I shall not easily support the return of madame de Monaco, without bringing you with her; my good-natured disposition is not yet changed. I know, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that La Marans dreads your return, as much as it is possible to dread any thing: and that she will leave no stone unturned to raise an obstacle to it; she cannot support your presence. If you will let me know a little more of the tricks that have been played you, I may perhaps be able to assist you in discovering the authors of them. You are greatly obliged to Langlade; he is no *writer* indeed, but he shows himself your friend on every occasion: he has spoken wonders to M. de Marseilles, and has puzzled him more than all the rest of your friends put together. M. Dirval is gone for Lyons, from whence he is to set out for Venice: his equipage was in high taste, and extremely brilliant. He says of you, *tanto t'odiaro quanto t'amai* †; for he pretends that you have slighted him. Monsieur de Marsillac ‡ writes

* The bishop of Marseilles.

† I shall hate thee as much as I have loved thee.

‡ Son to the duke de la Rochefoucault.

word home, that they shall set out the 10th on a grand expedition: monsieur de Turenne is marched forwards at the head of twenty thousand men.

LETTER * CCV.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO THE COUNT DE BUSSY.

Paris, May 14, 1672.

I MUST be very much changed not to understand your jests, and all the fine passages in your letters. You well know, count, that we had formerly the gift of understanding one another before we had opened our lips. One answered very pertinently to what the other intended to say; and if we had not wished to give each other the pleasure of pronouncing words with facility, our penetration would have almost spared us the trouble of conversation. When an intelligence of this kind is established between two persons, they can never be dull. In my opinion, to comprehend quickly is a very happy talent: there is a vivacity in it that is agreeable to others, and that makes us in good humour with ourselves. M. de la Rochefoucault says, truly, in his maxims, "We love those better who comprehend us readily, than those who must listen to understand our meaning." By the same rule you and I ought to love one another the more for the intelligence that subsists between us. I beg you to speak of me to every one who comes, and be careful to add some little traits, in your own style, to the eulogium the marchioness of * * * * has made on me. Be alert, and place yourself between the two extremes, with as much skill as she has evinced volubility.

No news is stirring. The king marches with the

army, but we know not where. His majesty's designs are as secret as he could wish. An officer wrote the other day to a friend in town: "I beg you to inform me whether we are going to besiege Maëstrecht, or to pass the Issel."

I assure you this campaign alarms me. Those who, from their misfortune rather than their inclination, are not in the army, are, in my opinion, the best off. One proof that the king is not tired of your letters is, that he reads them: he would not do this if it were unpleasant to him. Adieu, count: I am glad you like mine: it is a proof you do not hate the writer.

FROM M. DE CORBINELLI.

I HAVE a great inclination, sir, to take another trip into Bourgogne. There are a thousand things upon which I long to converse with you; for my last visit was too short. I have not failed to profit by the passages you marked for me. My mind is still occupied with them, for in my opinion no one says such good things as yourself. You know I am no flatterer. Preserve the divine manner you possess, which shows the man of quality, and is pleasing in the highest degree; I mean of having more thoughts than words, and never using a word too much. I do not say this to have an opportunity of introducing the precept of Horace; for I can introduce a precept unseasonably, merely to show my learning, if the fancy take me: you have long known me in this respect: to my mind you follow this rule of Horace better than any one.

Horace speaks of a style of writing called *satire*, by which he means an agreeable discourse, and useful and pleasing reflections upon manners, whether good or

bad: and he describes it thus. It is not enough, he says, to create a laugh; though that is a great point:

> Ergo non satis est risu diducere rictum
> Auditoris, et est quædam hæc quoque virtus:

but we must also, both in writing and speaking, be concise, and avoid a superfluity of words, that our thoughts may be visible and striking, and not enveloped in a cloud of phraseology that obscures them:

> Est brevitate opus, ut currat sententia, neu se
> Impediat verbis lassas onerantibus aures.

Moreover, we must not always be grave and severe, nor always smooth and agreeable, in our discourse:

> Et sermone opus est modò tristi, sæpe jocoso.

Neither should we dwell too long on the proofs of what we would advance, like the orator, nor enter too freely into the blandishments of the poet, who thinks only of amusing, not of profiting, his hearers:

> Defendente vicem modò rhetoris atque poëtæ.

Sometimes even all this should be avoided, and nothing appear but the gentleman, who attends but little to rule or order, and never fails to please by his negligence; who never intrudes his thoughts, and often suppresses a thousand beautiful ideas which present themselves in crowds upon his subject, because he would not appear to be a man of superior understanding:

> —— Interdum parcentis viribus, atque
> Extenuantis eas consultò.

This, sir, upon my faith and honour, is what you appear to me to observe better than any man I know. I

say so continually to our literati. If I come to Bussy, I will read the satires and epistles of Horace with you, and you will agree that it is impossible he should ever be excelled. This is the character Persius gives him:

> Omne vafer vitium ridenti Flaccus amico
> Tangit, et admissus circum præcordia ludit.

Madame de Sévigné wishes me to undertake a panegyric of your epistles†. Indeed, sir, Ovid himself ought to write it, in gratitude for the handsome dress in which you have clothed him.

LETTER *CCVI.

FROM THE COUNT DE BUSSY TO MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Chaseu, May 15, 1672.

I see plainly, my charming cousin, that you have this in common with many other people, that you must be praised to be agreeable. Because I assured you some time ago of the pleasure your letters afforded me, you have made your last agreeable from beginning to end. I know it is necessary to be in good humour, and that the subjects should be happily chosen: but above all we must feel that the persons to whom we write will understand us; for otherwise we are negligent. In reality, nothing can exceed your letter; for it abounds with the wisest things expressed in the most pleasing manner. I perfectly agree with you, that we ought to love another. Nobody knows your value so well as I, and nobody knows mine so well as you. It seems to me too as if no love were wanting on either side; and

† The translation of the Heroic Epistles of Paris to Helen, and Helen to Paris.

this love will last, if we do not place more confidence in others than in ourselves. We gain no news from the army; because the plans are not only kept secret, but even when known, it is wished that they should not be told: this is right. You also are right in saying that it is an alarming campaign. I believe with you that it will be a terrible one, and I will tell you why it must necessarily be so. Those who are engaged wish to acquire glory or to die; and those who look on love extraordinary events. Spectators, let me tell you, are cruel, and unhappy spectators a thousand times more cruel than others.

TO M. DE CORBINELLI.

You delight me, sir, by saying I resemble Horace. If it be so, it is to nature I owe the obligation, for I have never read him. I do not know whether it be from likeness, that I am so delighted with the extracts from him, but I can assure you nothing ever delighted me more. My modesty will, however, prevent me from praising him much in future, lest you should think I am praising myself under his name, as we sometimes do when we praise an officer under whom we have fought. I must, however, repeat, that I am charmed with him; and if he could see your commentary upon him, he would be charmed in his turn. If the king thought as I think of you, I am certain he would order you to read Horace to the dauphin, and perhaps to himself.

LETTER CCVII.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO THE COUNTESS DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Monday, May 18, 1672.

Your acocunt of your journey, my sweet child, is admirable; I think I am reading some pretty romance, the heroine of which is extremely dear to me, and I take the most lively interest in all her adventures. I cannot but think that this excursion, in the most enchanting spot imaginable, surrounded with the choicest perfumes of nature, treated like a queen wherever you came, must have been delightful: an incident in your life so novel and interesting, could not fail to please; and though your heart led you sometimes to wish for me, I am sure you were amused; and this thought gives me real satisfaction. If you have formed the same design this year that you did the last, to separate yourself still farther from me, you have succeeded better. For my own part, I have not taken the same steps: I intend to act very differently. Depend upon it, my dear, you will see me at Grignan this summer: leave it to me, and I will bring it to bear, I warrant you. It is great presumption, indeed, to answer thus confidently for one's actions; but as it is with a due deference to the will of Providence, we may surely be allowed the liberty of expressing our desires and intentions.

I shall make a point of seeing madame de Martel: the polite reception her husband gave you, requires no less at my hands. I receive all your little billets with the greatest pleasure; they all bear marks of their author, which cannot fail of pleasing me. I frequently hear from my son; but, believe me, my heart is deep-

ly afflicted at the thoughts of this war: his regiment is going to join the king's army.

It is thought we are going to besiege Maestricht. This siege is a little less alarming than the passage of the Issel. We really tremble whenever we receive any letters from the army; but it will be much worse a fortnight hence. M. de la Rochefoucault and I mutually afflict and comfort each other. He has three or four sons there that are very dear to him.

Madame la Marans came yesterday to madame de la Fayette's: she looked as gloomy as if she had entered into an agreement with Lucifer, and the day of its termination was approaching. She certainly is in profound grief for some warrior, who has left her without regret *. I should never make an end if I were to relate all the kind things that M. de la Rochefoucault says of you; how much he delights in talking of you, and in making me read passages in your letters: he is a good creature. Madame de la Fayette desires me to tell you, that though she never enjoys her health, she is not at all the more reconciled to death, but rather the contrary. For my part, I own there are a great many disagreeables in the world; but yet I am not so far out of conceit with it, as your philosophy would enjoin: you will find it a hard matter, my dear child, to get this fanciful love of life out of your mother's head.

You will have heard news of M. de Coulanges from himself †, that he has seen M. de Vivonne in his way, and that they pass their lives very tranquilly and pleasantly with the marquis de Villeroi. My poor aunt continues very ill, and is a spectacle to pierce every heart. Our abbé embraces you, La Mousse honours you, and

* Monsieur le Duc, afterwards monsieur le Prince.

† Monsieur and madame de Coulanges were at that time at Lyons.

both intend to see your Provence; for myself, I only desire to see you, and what is more, to see you, and see you for ever. Valcroissant has sent word that he had this honour at Marseilles, and that you were more beautiful than an angel; preserve this beauty till I come. Your daughter is very amiable; I think I shall bring her with me; but I shall take all necessary precautions not to run any risk with her: I will never believe that a mother does not love her daughter if she is handsome.

I have no news to tell you; my letters are very dull, compared with yours. I could not do better than send M. Pomponne what you expressed so well upon the affair at Marseilles.

Your president de Boue visits me sometimes: he is an honest man, but I do not think it was he who invented gunpowder and printing. I do not know when you will have a first president; I believe few persons, except those of Provence, are desirous of the place. Madame de Coëtquen has had the measles. Madame de Sully is gone to Sully with her husband: madame de Verneuil is at Roui with hers: madame de Castelnau is with madame de Louvigni; and the marshal's lady is by herself, like a turtle mourning her absent mate. D'Hacqueville is going into Britany; if you want any more news apply to him, for we are so dull and languid, that life is quite insipid to us. It is thought that we have invested Maestricht; but nothing is yet confirmed.

LETTER CCVIII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, May 20, 1672.

I CAN easily understand, my dear child, the pleasures, the magnificence, and the expense of your journey; I mentioned it to our abbé as a serious affair. But those things are necessary: we should, however, examine whether we are willing to run the hazard of the abyss into which great expenses lead us. It is to little purpose to take care of ourselves, when we enter truly into the interests of persons who are dear to us, and feel all their sorrows, perhaps, more painfully than they do themselves; this is to destroy all the pleasures of life, and we must be mad still to cling to it. I may say the same of health; I have doubtless a great share of it, but it is of no other service to me than to enable me to attend upon those who are sick: that treacherous fever has made another attack upon poor madame de la Fayette, and my aunt grows worse and worse every day: when I leave her I go to La Fayette, and from her I return again to my aunt: neither Livri, nor its pleasing walks, nor my charming house, any longer amuse me; and yet I must run to Livri for a moment, for I can scarcely hold up my head. See how Providence distributes sorrows and evils; after all, mine are nothing in comparison of the state of my poor aunt. Ah! noble Indifference, where is your abode? you alone constitute our happiness, and without you, all is ineffectual: but since we must suffer, it is better to suffer in this way than in any other.

I have seen madame de Martel at her own house, and

said every thing to her that you may suppose. Her husband has written her the most extraordinary accounts of your beauty; he is overwhelmed with your civilities; he gives you the greatest praises; she brought the letter to show it me: I visited her afterwards, and so quitted all your scores. Nothing could be more romantic than your aquatic excursions, and your entertainments in that famous ship the Royal Lewis. The real Lewis is in full march with all his army. The letters from thence say nothing positive, for every one is kept in ignorance of the place of their destination. Maestricht is now out of the question. It is reported that they are going to possess themselves of three places, one on the Rhine, another on the Issel, and a third immediately afterwards. I will acquaint you with their names when I know them myself. Nothing can be more confused than the accounts we have from the army; every one is in the dark. It was but the other day, that a person of very considerable rank * wrote thus to one of his friends: "I should be glad if you would inform me whither we are going, and if we are to pass the Issel, or lay siege to Maestricht." So that you may judge what information we have. I assure you all this secrecy makes my heart ache. You are happy in having your husband safe, and doomed to no other suffering than that of having your frightful face to look at all day in a litter. Poor man, he had reason indeed to get on horseback, to avoid the continuance of so disagreeable a sight! For how was it possible to look at it so long? Alas! I remember once when coming from Britany, you sat opposite to me during the journey; and what pleasure did I not feel in constantly

* Monsieur le Duc.

looking on that lovely face? It is true, indeed, we were in a coach; surely then there must be some curse pronounced upon litters*.

Madame du Pui-du-Fou will not suffer me to bring my little girl with me: she says it is running a great risk; and I therefore submit. I would not willingly put her little ladyship's person in danger, for I love her most sincerely. I have had her hair cut in the present fashion, which suits her extremely well: her complexion, her throat, her little figure, are admirable; she does a thousand little things; she talks, she caresses, she fights, she makes the sign of the cross, she asks pardon, she curtsies, she kisses her hand, she shrugs up her shoulders, she dances, she coaxes, she scolds; in short, she is quite a pet: I amuse myself for hours together with her. I would not that she should die for the world. I told you the other day, I did not know how a mother could help loving her daughter.

LETTER CCIX.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Monday, May 23, 1672.

My little friend was not at the post-office yesterday when the post came in, so that I had no letters brought me: they are about the town by this time, and I am every moment in expectation of them. This disappointment has vexed me; however, I will have a little chat with you in the mean time. I saw M. de Marignan this morning, whom I mistook for M. de Maillanes. This embarrassed me a little at first; however, to get

* It is asserted, that if two persons, the most fond of each other, were to make a long journey together in the same litter, it would make them hate one another's company most heartily.

out of it as soon as possible, I begged him to explain those two names to me *, which he did with the greatest politeness: he easily allowed for my mistake, and set me right instantly. He is pleased with me, and I am pleased with him. He has seen your little girl: he tells me your son is as handsome as an angel, and yourself as handsome as two.

I dined yesterday at La Troche's with the abbé Arnauld, and madame de Valentine. After dinner we had le Camus, his son, and Itier; they made up an exquisite little concert. After this mademoiselle de Grignan arrived with her gentleman Beaulieu, her governess Helene, her woman Mary, her little page Jaquot, her nurse's son, and her nurse Jeanne in her Sunday clothes; she is the neatest country-woman I ever saw. This little troop made a pretty appearance; we viewed them with pleasure, and made them pass on into the garden; I was charmed with the procession from the nursery. Madame du Pui-du-Fou has bewildered my brains in not permitting me to take my little girl with me; for after all, I am not satisfied that she should remain with the nurse in the country; and if the nurse were to pass the summer at Paris, she would die with grief. But, my child, we think of setting out. One day we say, the abbé and I, "Let us go; my aunt will live till autumn." This is resolved upon. The next day we find her so extremely ill, that we say again, "We must not think of going; it would be barbarous; the next moon will carry her off." Thus we go on from day to day, despairing of an end. You can easily comprehend the state we are in; it is extremely uncomfortable. What makes me most wish myself in Provence is, that I may

* This alludes to madame de Sévigné's natural forgetfulness of persons and names, of which she herself takes notice in former letters.

feel greater regret at the loss of a person who has been always dear to me: I find that if I stay here, the restraint she will occasion me, will weaken my affection for her, and injure my temper. Do you not admire the unaccountable disposition of things in this world, and the unexpected manner in which events often cross our way? All that is certain is, that by some means or other, we are resolved upon going to Grignan this summer. Leave to us the care of getting over this unhappy difficulty as well as we can; and be assured, that the abbé and I are more inclined to break through a point of good manners, by going hence too soon, than to violate our friendship for you, by staying here longer than is necessary.

I enclose you a note from the abbé Arnauld, which will inform you of the news: his brother*, when he set out, desired him to communicate to me all he should send him: the first page is a bungling piece of work, to fix a day to dine with M. d'Haroüis: we accommodate this abbé as well as we can; he is not often at Paris, and when he is, we are glad of an opportunity to oblige him. He desired me the other day to show him a letter of yours, his brother having highly praised your style. In showing it him, I was myself surprised at the beauty of your periods; they are sometimes truly harmonious. Your style is every thing that could be wished, it is finished and perfect; you have only to go on in the same way, and not attempt to do better.

It is now ten o'clock, and I must make up my packet. I have not received your letter. I have been to the post-office; my little man made a great many apologies, but I am not the better for them. My letter is in the hands of factors, and I may as well look for a needle

* M. de Pomponne.

in a bottle of hay. I shall receive it to-morrow, and shall not answer it till Friday. Adieu, my dear child; it is unnecessary to say I love you; you certainly believe it, and you need not fear believing it too much.

LETTER *CCX.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, May 27, 1672.

You need not wish any one to write descriptions for you, for you excel in them yourself. I believe all the wonders you tell me of Provence, but you know how to set them off to the best advantage; and if your beautiful country could express its obligations to you, I am sure it would not fail to do so. I think it would also testify its surprise at your dislike to the divine perfumes it has to boast; never has it witnessed the strange taste of a person refreshing herself upon a dunghill. Your situation was certainly extraordinary, and yet, my child, I can easily comprehend it, for the most unwholesome thing in the world, is to sleep surrounded with perfumes. All excess is hurtful, and the best things are unpleasant when they are forced upon us: what a fine subject for moralising! Your uncle de Sévigné will be very uneasy about you till he understands the truth. You expressed yourself admirably the other day upon the subject, by observing, that every pleasure loses the name when accompanied by abundance, and acquired with facility. I own to you, however, that I long to make the trial; how will you contrive to let me see a little spot of your fairy-land?

I can easily conceive your joy at seeing madame de Monaco, and hers too. How much you must have had to say to each other! She opens her heart freely upon

the most delicate subjects: I should very much like to know what you talked of. Our d'Hacqueville is delighted that you made this charming excursion; he is going into Britany; he has seen your letter, and so have Guitaut and M. de la Rochefoucault. They are all pleased with your account, and with your tragic history in particular: it is told in perfection. We are afraid you have killed the poor Diana to give effect to the conclusion: we are willing to give you credit, and to thank you also for driving the lover from your apartment: if you had thrown him into the sea, you would have done better still: he must be an odious fellow, and the bad taste of Diana almost reconciles us to her death: her ghost will walk from the example of M. B***s †. I have informed you of the death of the latter: he would not confess, but sent every priest to the devil, and himself after them: his body is deposited in the church of Saint Nicholas, where the people have taken it into their heads that his spirit is nightly seen all in flames; that it raves, swears, and threatens, in consequence of which they would deny him Christian burial, and cut the throat of the priest who admitted it into the sanctuary. This folly is carried to such a height, that it has been necessary to take the body privately from the church, and apply to the civil power to protect the priest from insult. This was new yesterday morning; but it is not worthy to hold a candle to your love story.

We expect our little Coulanges to-morrow. I am very much concerned at receiving no letter from my son: there is so little regulation observed as to intercourse with the army, that we receive no letters scarcely but what come by express. I have heard nothing new to-day; and I have so great an aversion to relate un-

† M. de Boufflers.

truths, that I had rather say nothing: whatever I tell you is true, and comes from the best authority. I am now going to Livri; I shall take my little girl, her nurse, and all the little establishment, with me. I wish them to breathe the air of spring: I shall return to-morrow, not being able to be away from my aunt for a longer time; but I will leave my little girl there for three or four days, after which I shall want her with me: she is my chief amusement every morning. It is so long since I walked, or breathed the fresh air, that I must have pity on myself as well as on other people. I am preparing every day for my journey; my travelling-dress is making; my carriage has been ready for a week past: in short, my child, I am half on wing, and if God should spare the life of our poor aunt longer than we imagine, I shall follow your advice, and set out with the hope of seeing her again.

Write to M. de Laon*, who is a cardinal at last: you may guess his joy when I tell you, this dignity has always been the summit of his ambition. I have just written to him. M. d'Haroüis is going to Britany; he takes d'Hacqueville with him, and our friend Chesières, who will henceforth be more a Breton than a Parisian. The count de Chapelles has written to me from the army: he says that he was yesterday, I know not what day he means by yesterday, in a party of consequence, where your wisdom, worth, and beauty, were praised to the skies, and that your love for me was also included. If this last was flattery, it is so agreeable, that I receive it with open arms.

* Cesar d'Estrées, who had been cardinal *in petto* from August 1671, but the promotion was only then made public.

LETTER CCXI.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, May 30, 1672.

I HAD no letter from you yesterday, my poor child: your journey to Monaco had put you quite out of sorts: I was afraid some little disaster of this kind would befal me. I now send you news from M. de Pomponne: the fashion of being wounded is already begun: my heart is very heavy with the fears of this campaign. My son writes by every opportunity; he is at present in good health.

My aunt is still in a deplorable state, and yet we have the courage to think of appointing a day for our departure, assuming a hope which in reality we cannot entertain. I cannot help thinking, that many of the events of life are ill arranged; they are, as it were, rugged stones lying across our way, too unwieldy to be removed, and which we must get over as well as we can, though not without pain and difficulty. Is not the comparison just? I shall not bring my little girl with me; she goes on very well at Livri, and is to stay there during the summer. You never saw Livri in such perfection as it is at present: the trees are beautifully green, and the honeysuckles are every where in profusion. I am not yet tired of their perfume; but you despise our shrubberies, since you have been accustomed to your groves of orange-trees.

I have a very tragical history to communicate to you from Livri. Do you remember that pretended devotee, who walked so steadily without turning his head, that you would have thought he was carrying a glass of water upon it? His devotion has turned his brain.

One night he gave himself five or six stabs with a knife, and fell on his knees in his cell, naked, and weltering in his blood. On entering, he was found in this posture. "Good God! brother, what have you done? Who has treated you thus?" He replied very calmly, "Father, I am doing penance." He fainted away; he was put to bed; his wounds, which were found very dangerous, were dressed; with uncommon care and attention he recovered at the end of three months, and was sent back to his friends.

If you do not think such a head sufficiently disordered, tell me so, and you shall have the story of madame Paul*, who is fallen desperately in love with a great booby of five or six and twenty, whom she had taken to be her gardener. The lady has managed her affairs admirably; she has married him. The fellow is a mere brute, and has not common sense; he will beat her soon, he has already threatened to do it; no matter, she was resolved to have him. I have never seen such violent love; there is all the extravagance of sentiments imaginable, were they but rightly applied: but they are like a rough sketch of an ill painting; all the colours are there, they want only to be properly disposed. It is extremely amusing to me to meditate on the caprices of love: yet I really tremble, when I reflect on such an affair as this. What insolence! Alas! where can we hope to find security? This is a curious anecdote indeed, but how unlike the pleasing relations you give me!

I beg you not to forget M. d'Haroüis, whose heart is a master-piece of perfection, and who adores you. Madame de la Fayette is still indisposed; M. de la Rochefoucault is still lame. We talk sometimes so dismally,

* Widow to the gardener at Livri.

that it seems as if we had no resource but to hang ourselves. Madame de la Fayette's garden is the prettiest thing in the world; it is full of flowers and perfumes; we often spend our evenings there, for she dares not venture into a carriage; we could wish sometimes that you were behind a certain palisade to hear our conversation on certain unknown countries which we think we have discovered. In short, my child, waiting for the happy day of my departure, I go from the fauxbourg to my aunts's fire-side, and from my aunt's fire-side to the fauxbourg. Adieu, my beloved child, I am very impatient to hear of you and your little son. The weather must be extremely hot in your climate; I fear for him, and for you much more; for I have never yet had reason to think it possible to love any thing so well as you. I embrace dear Grignan. Does he love you as much as ever? I beg him to love me also.

LETTER CCXII.

TO THE SAME.

Livri, Thursday, June 2, 1672.

I HAVE received the dear excellent volume at last: never did I read any thing so amusing, so well written, and, at the same time, so interesting. I cannot sufficiently express my obligation to you, my dear child, for your letter, which is a complete journal; this is a sure proof of the pleasure and interest we take in a correspondence; whereas, when a correspondence becomes disagreeable, we laugh at these minutiæ, we do not wish them to be recorded; but upon this subject you are every thing I could wish; and it is no small pleasure to me, whose greatest consists in my correspondence with you.

It is certain, my child, that one of my letters is lost; but I suspect no one in particular; those of consequence reached you, and I am easy about the rest. You seem very well pleased with this minister, and I am persuaded you will never have occasion to be otherwise. You will easily guess that I allude to the great Pomponne, and it was to know what I said of him, I suppose, that some people had the curiosity to intercept my letter: I cannot however conceive, who could be guilty of so paltry a theft; there can be no great taste to gratify in stealing letters between persons so nearly related as we are: it is a miracle almost if they contain any thing interesting to others, for it very rarely happens that they do. However, it is done, and without my being able to imagine by whom. God grant, my dear, that you may never sustain a greater loss.

We know nothing about La Marans, nor what kind of life she leads in her retirement; but madame de la Fayette will entertain you with some of her reveries as soon as she is able. We think we have discovered something like an episode of a young prince through the profusion of grief which she exhibited lately; and a few words she dropped by the way, serve to confirm us in this idea. I only hint at our nonsensical notions to you now, but will explain them more at large hereafter. But à propos of explaining; you have explained to me too well the perils and dangers you have been in during your voyage: for my part I cannot comprehend them; that is, I cannot comprehend how people can expose themselves so much: I had infinitely rather go upon one of the present expeditions. I could better meet death in the ardour of fight, spurred on by emulation, and the noise of drums and trumpets, than sit and see two immense waves bidding for my life, and threatening me at every instant with destruction. And then again on

the other hand, your Alps, where the path is scarcely so broad as your litter, so that your life depends entirely on the surefootedness of your mules! Indeed, my child, the thoughts of these things make me tremble from head to foot; my service to that country, but I will never go there while I live, and I tremble for you: madame de Monaco never had a lover in her life that would have ventured so much for her. What you say about the *first* and the *last* is admirable; it is truly epigrammatical. Did you not talk about Madame *? Is she pretty well reconciled to her loss? Is she still lame†? Is she not very much mortified to see herself on that side the Alps? Does she not intend returning to Paris if possible? I pretty well guess her joy at seeing you: your conversations were doubtless without end, and she could never sufficiently express her obligations to you for such a visit. It is true, she returned it very speedily, but it was not attended with the same circumstances. You speak of the princess d'Harcourt ‡ in a very pleasant mannner. Brancas is very much disturbed; I don't know for what reason: he is a volunteer in the army; and as he is out of humour at a thousand things, he will muse perhaps or fall asleep just in the mouth of a cannon: he knows no other way of getting rid of his misfortunes. He wrote the other day to madame de Villars and to me: the superscription was *to Mr. de Villars at Madrid.* Madame de Villars, who knows him well §, opened the letter, and the first words she found were *my*

* Madame de Monaco was the chief favourite of Madame, (Henrietta-Anne of England, sister to Charles II.) who died June 29, 1670.

† By a bleeding badly performed.

‡ Frances de Brancas, mentioned in the 202d letter.

§ The count de Brancas is the same whom La Bruyere intended to represent under the name of Menalcas, in his treatise on the Memoirs of the Age.

dear girls. We have not answered it yet. You say I never mention your brother: indeed I cannot tell why, for I am sure I think of him incessantly, and am extremely uneasy about him: I love him very much; he conducts himself so well towards me, and his letters are written in such a style, that whoever should find them in my desk after my death, would think they were written by one of the best young men of his age. This war therefore gives me great concern. My son is at present in the king's army; that is, in the lion's mouth, as well as the rest.

We shall not be long without hearing great news: my heart flutters with apprehension at the thought. The marquis de Castlenau has the small-pox. It was reported yesterday that Desmarais, son to the grand falconer, and Bouligneux, had died in the same disorder; if I do not contradict this in my letter to-morrow from Paris, you may depend on it for truth. I came here this morning in my carriage alone, in order to take back my little girl. I must purchase a bonnet and a frock for her. I shall have her with me till two or three days before my departure; she is very well; she is pretty without being handsome. She does a hundred little things that fascinate me.

Master Paul's widow is really gone mad; there has been a stop put to her wedding; her great booby of a lover cares no longer for her, but thinks Molly * very pretty, and very good-humoured; in short, my child, she did not play her cards well: I tell you fairly, if ever I had wished to make a conquest, I should certainly have contrived to keep you out of the way. What is passing here is quite in the style of a tragi-comic romance. Nothing is heard of but darts, flames,

* The daughter of madame Paul.

furies, and despair. Methinks I see one of the little Loves, who are so beautifully described in the prologue of Aminta, as concealing themselves in the woods: I fancy him taking aim at poor Molly; but the wisest may be mistaken, and he shot the mother instead of the daughter: be that as it may, the wound is incurable. Were you here, you would be extremely diverted at this odd adventure, and at the overgrown clown who is the hero of the piece. I assure you I have my hands full, and am obliged to take Molly away with me, to prevent her from transplanting her mother. Alas, how these poor mothers are to be pitied!

Do not think madame de la Fayette's illness can retard my journey; she is no longer in danger: and since I can venture to set out notwithstanding the situation my poor aunt is in, you may believe nothing will prevent me. M. de Coulanges did not expect to find her alive; she was so much changed he would not have known her. She takes pleasure in nothing; she is half in heaven, and a true saint; she thinks but of her grand journey, and easily understands the one I am about to take: she gives me leave to quit her, with a heart wholly weaned from the world; she enters into all my feelings; this sensibly affects me, and I cannot but admire the counterpoise which God has set against the ineffable joy that I should otherwise have in coming to you. I shall leave my poor aunt half dead; this idea stings me to the soul, and I shall be in continual apprehension for my son's safety. Ah! how truly this savours of the world! You say that we must cease to wish for any thing; you may add, and learn to be perfectly contented; but that is a state not reserved for mortals.

You are returned to Grignan, again; well, my dear child, stay there till I come and fetch you away. Our dear abbé agrees with me, and so does La Mousse.

You never had a little party set out to you with greater joy and alacrity. Adieu, my love, till to-morrow, when I shall write to you from Paris, if only two lines. I am now going to amuse myself with a turn in these delightful walks, where I have seen you so many thousand times, and where I shall most infallibly think of you.

TO MONSIEUR DE GRIGNAN.

You flatter me too much, my dear count; I shall accept of but one part of your fine speeches, and that is the thanks you return me for having given you a wife, that constitutes all your happiness; for indeed, I think I contributed a little towards it: but the authority you have acquired over her in Provence, has been wholly owing to yourself, to your merit, your birth, and your conduct: all this I have nothing to do with. Ah! how much you lose by my heart not being at ease! Le Camus is delighted with me; he tells me I sing his airs extremely well: he certainly composes divinely; but I am so dull and woe-begone, that I can learn nothing; you would sing them like an angel: I assure you Le Camus has a high opinion both of your voice and judgement. I regret the loss of these little accomplishments which we are too apt to neglect: why should we lose them? I have always said that we ought not to part with them, and that they can never be an encumbrance: but what is to be done with a rope round the neck? You have given my daughter one of the most delightful journeys in the world; she is quite enchanted with it! but then you have dragged her over hills and dales, and exposed her to the dangers of the Alps, and to the uncivil waves of the Mediterranean: in short, I have a month's mind to chide you for it; but let me first embrace you most affectionately.

TO MADAME DE GRIGNAN.

Friday, June 3, 1672.

HERE I am at Paris again, where I find our two gentlemen * are not so dead as they were yesterday. Marshal Villeroi's lady is at the point of death. No news from the army.

LETTER CCXIII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Monday, June 6, 1672.

As I received no letter from you yesterday, which was a great disappointment to me, I imagined you were engaged in receiving madame de Monaco; what comforts me is, that you are in a place where you may plant cabbages, and are no longer exposed to waves and precipices. I have been under terrible apprehensions, in reflecting on the dangers of your journey.

My aunt received the viaticum again to-day, as a preparative to her own journey, with angelic devotion. Her preparation, her patience, her resignation, are things so much above nature, that they deserve to be considered as so many miracles of religion: she is entirely weaned from the world; her present state, painful as it is, is the only desirable one to a true Christian. She insists upon our taking our journey, as I have already told you; we intend to obey her; but we sometimes believe she will go before us. In a word, we have fixed upon a day; and if I had not for some time been accustomed not to do what I wish, I should give you

* Desmarais and Bouligneux, mentioned in the preceding part of the letter.

notice not to write to me any more: but this I dare not venture to do: for I love your letters so well, that I had rather receive them at Grignan, than be disappointed of them here.

You know the marquis de Villeroi has left Lyons and madame de Coulanges, to go, like the knight of the black armour, into the army of the elector of Cologne, that he may have the honour of serving the king at least in the army of his allies. There are different opinions, whether he has done well or ill. The king does not love to be disobeyed, yet he may approve this martial ardour; the success will show how we are to judge of it.

You have had the comedians with you: I dare swer for it, that in whatever way your theatre was decorated, it was better than that of Paris. I remarked this the other day, as I was amusing myself with Beaulieu. Madam, said he, there are none but apprentices now who frequent plays; you do not see there so much as a page or footman; every body is in the army. If a man appears in the streets with a sword by his side, the little children hoot at him as he passes along. Such is the face of Paris at present; but it will make another appearance in a few months.

You say humorously, that you fear you should rob me of something, by polishing your letters: take care, I beseech you, and do not give them a second touch, or you will make them perfect pieces of eloquence. The pure tone of nature in which you write is the best, and pleases more than any. Keep your own amiable mind, it has larger eyes than those in your head: though these are well enough considering.

I shall send you word that I am setting out when you least expect it. Madame de Villeroi * is recovering.

* Magdalen de Crequi.

There is no better news than what I send you: I always inquire after news, and every one takes a pleasure in telling it me, because they know I do not inquire for myself. I am in pain, my dear, about the symptoms your fever has left behind it. It is impossible for me not to wish for to-morrow, that I may hear from you. I embrace you with extreme tenderness.

LETTER CCXIV.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Monday, June 13, 1672.

I ENCLOSE a letter of my son's, which will amuse you. You will be pleased with the accounts he gives of what is passing in the army. You will see that the king is so perfectly happy, that for the future he will only need to say what he desires to have done in Europe, without being at the trouble of placing himself at the head of his army; and every one will think himself happy in obeying his orders. I am informed he will pass the Issel with as much ease as he can pass the Seine. Terror every where paves the way for victory; the joy of the courtiers is a good omen. Brancas writes that they laugh incessantly from morning to night. I have a little history that I must send you.

Immediately upon the death of the old Bourdeille, M. de Montausier wrote to the king, to ask the place of sénéchal of Poictou for M. de Laurière his brother-in-law: the king granted it. Soon after, young Matas asked it, and told the king that this post had been a long time in the family. The king wrote to M. de Montausier desiring him to give it up, promising to give something else to M. de Laurière. M. de Montausier wrote back to his majesty, that, for his part, he should

be extremely glad to have it in his power to give it up; but that his brother-in-law having already received the compliments of the province, it was impossible; and that his majesty might provide in some other way for young Matas. The king was piqued at this, and bit his lips: "Well," said he, "he shall have it for three years; but after that I shall give it to young Matas, with whom it shall always remain." This is a very unfortunate incident for M. de Montausier.

I should have sent this to M. de Grignan, but it is the same thing; my last two letters are written equally to you both, and are not equivalent to one good one. You will not have a Provençal for a first president; I have been told so from good authority. The bishop of Marseilles came to see me yesterday, with the marquis de Vence, and two deputies; I thought he had been going to make me an harangue. Adieu, my dear child; I beg you will be very glad to see me, come when I will, and think of the pleasure I shall receive. This is a very foolish letter; I should be better employed in sleeping, than in writing.

LETTER CCXV.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, June 17, 1672,
11 o'clock at night.

I HAVE just heard a melancholy piece of news, the particulars of which I cannot give you, because I am not yet informed of them; all I have heard is, that M. de Longueville was killed in crossing the Issel *: this is grievous intelligence. I was at madame de la Fayette's,

* The Rhine it should be, for the Issel was abandoned.

with M. de la Rochefoucault, when I first heard it; and was told at the same time that M. de Marsillac was wounded, and that the chevalier de Marsillac * died of his wound. This storm fell on him in my presence; he was deeply afflicted with it; his tears flowed from his heart, for his firmness of mind prevented any unmanly expression of grief.

After hearing this, I had not the patience to inquire any farther. I flew to M. de Pomponne's, who reminded me that my son was in the king's army, which had no part in this expedition; it was reserved for the prince, who, it is said, is wounded; it is said too, that he passed the river in a little boat, that Guitry and Nogent are drowned, M. de la Feuillade and Roquelaure wounded, and that a great number have perished on this fatal occasion. When I know the particulars, I will inform you.

Guitaut has just sent a gentleman to me from the hotêl de Condé; from him I learn that the prince was wounded in the hand, that M. de Longueville † forced the barrier and presented himself the first; he was also the first that fell, being instantly killed; the rest differs but little from what I told you above: M. de Guitry and M. de Nogent drowned, M. de Marsillac wounded, and a great many others that are not yet known. But the Issel [Rhine] is crossed. The prince is represented in the boat giving his orders with the composure and divine courage that characterise him. M. de Marsillac was wounded by a musket-shot in the shoulder, and in the jaw, but the bone is not injured. Adieu, my dear child; my mind is somewhat disturbed, for though my son is in the king's army, he will have so many opportunities

* Two sons of M. de la Rochefoucault.

† The duke de Longueville, heated by wine, spurred on his horse to the very bank of the entrenchment of the enemy; he then fired his pistol, crying that he would give no quarter. The enemy immediately fired, and killed him upon the spot.

of signalising himself that I tremble, and die with apprehension.

LETTER *CCXVI.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO THE COUNT DE BUSSY.

Paris, June 19, 1672.

Your great boy is now in my room. I sent my carriage to bring him to dinner with me. My uncle, the abbé, who was here, gave him a sheet of paper folded up, which, as he found on opening it, contained the genealogy of the Rabutins. He was very much pleased with it, and is now amusing himself in tracing from whence he came. If he amuse himself in the same way in thinking where he shall go, we shall not dine very soon; but I will spare him the trouble of this meditation, by assuring him he is going in the direct road to death, and a speedy death too, if he follows your profession, which there is every appearance he will do. I am certain the idea will not spoil his appetite: he springs from too noble a blood to be surprised at this melancholy intelligence. But I cannot imagine how a person can be exposed a thousand times, as you have been, without being killed as often. This reflection has occupied my mind all day. The death of Longueville, Guitry, Nogent, and many others; the wounds of the prince Marsillac, Vivonne, Montrevel, Revel, the count de Saulx, de Terme, and a thousand others, whom I am not acquainted with, have given me a dreadful idea of war. I cannot comprehend the crossing the Rhine by swimming. To throw themselves in on horseback, like so many hounds pursuing a stag, and to be neither drowned, nor knocked on the head in landing, confounds my imagination so much, that it makes me

giddy. God has preserved my son hitherto; but who can consider himself safe in battle? Adieu, my dear cousin, I am going to dinner. Your son is well made, and pleasing in his manners. I am glad you like my letters. I cannot be of your opinion without great vanity.

LETTER *CCXVII.

FROM THE COUNT DE BUSSY TO MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Chaseu, June 30, 1672.

It would seem, madam, by your letters, as if none but soldiers died. But the truth is, war only hastens the death of some, who, if they had not engaged in it, would have lived a little longer. For my part, I have been in many a perilous situation, without being even wounded. Misfortune has visited me in a different way; and, to speak candidly, I prefer having lived a little unhappily, to dying young. A hundred thousand people have been killed in the first action in which they were engaged, and a hundred thousand in the second: cosi l'ha voluto il fato—so fate has decreed. But I see you are alarmed, and I must cheer you by saying, that ten campaigns are sometimes made without drawing a sword, and that we are often in battles without seeing the enemy; for instance, when we are in the second line, or rear guard, and the first line decides the combat, as in the battle of the Downs in 1658. In the field, the officers of the cavalry are in greater danger than other officers; in sieges, the officers of the infantry are a thousand times the most exposed; and here, madam, I must relate to you, what M. de Turenne told me he heard some one say to the late prince William of Orange, that young women thought men always in a

situation to marry, and that monks thought soldiers in the army had always drawn swords in their hands. The interest you take in this campaign, makes you reflect as you never reflected before. If your son were not in the service, you would consider this action, as you have done a thousand others that have been mentioned to you, without emotion, and you would call crossing the Rhine a bold, not a rash act, as you now do. Believe me, my dear cousin, the generality of things are great or little only as our imagination makes them so. The swimming across the Rhine is a noble act, but it is not so rash a one as you suppose. Two thousand horses cross to attack four or five hundred. The two thousand are supported by a numerous army, where the king commands in person, and the four or five hundred are troops terrified by the sudden and vigorous manner in which the campaign was begun. If the Dutch had possessed more firmness in this rencounter, they would only have killed a few more men, and in the end have been overpowered by numbers. If the prince of Orange had been on the other side of the Rhine, with his army, I do not think our troops would have attempted to cross over to meet him; if they had, that would have been rash *. Yet Alexander did so in crossing the Granicus. He swam over with fifty thousand men, in defiance of a hundred thousand men who opposed him. It is true, if he had been beaten he would have been called a fool; and it is only because he succeeded, that it has been proclaimed the most glorious enterprise in the world.

I am glad, my dear cousin, that your hatred to war proceeds only from your fears for the future, and that

* Bussy judged as posterity has done of the crossing the Rhine, which was the subject of so many exaggerated praises; but whether this letter was shewed, or was written or mentioned to others, the court knew his opinion, and was less eager to recall him from exile.

M. de Sévigné has escaped so well. It is to be hoped that he will always be equally fortunate, though marshal de la Ferté tells us that war says: *Wait for me, I shall have thee.* Let me know if M. de Sévigné was ordered to go over. If my son pleases you, he may possibly please others: you are a model both of discernment and taste.

LETTER CCXVIII.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO MADAME DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Monday, June 20, 1672.

I CANNOT reflect upon the situation you have been in, without great emotion; and though I know you are out of danger, yet I cannot turn my eyes on what has passed, without a horror that distracts me. Alas! how much was I in the dark about a health that was so dear to me! If any one had told me, that my daughter was in greater danger than if she had been in the army, how little should I have believed it! Must I suffer this useless grief in addition to so many other sorrows that afflict my heart? The extreme danger my son is in; the war, which rages every day with greater violence; the couriers, who bring no other news but the death of some friend or acquaintance, and may bring accounts still more fatal; the fear of hearing ill news, and yet the curiosity of knowing it; the desolation of those who are in excess of grief, and with whom I pass a great part of my time; the strange state of health my aunt is in, and my extreme desire of seeing you; all this afflicts and consumes me, and forces me to lead a life so contrary to my inclination, that I have need of more than a common share of health to support it.

You have never seen Paris as it is at present; all the

world is in tears, or fears to be so. Poor madame de Nogent is almost beside herself. Madame de Longueville pierces every heart with her complaints. I have not seen her indeed, but this is what I am told. Mademoiselle de Vertus returned two days since from Port-Royal, where she resides. They sent for her and M. Arnauld to impart to madame de Longueville the terrible news. The very sight of mademoiselle de Vertus was sufficient; her sudden return was too sure a sign that some fatal accident had happened. As soon therefore as she appeared——"Ah! mademoiselle, how is it with my brother*?" She did not dare, even in thought, to inquire farther. "Madam, he is recovered of his wound——there has been a battle"——"And my son?"——No answer was made. "Ah! mademoiselle, my son, my dear child! answer me; is he dead?"——"I have no words to answer you, madam."——"Oh my dear son! Was he killed on the spot? Had he not a single moment? Oh, God! what a sacrifice is this!" And she threw herself upon the bed, and by expressions of the most lively sorrow, by fainting fits, by convulsions, by the silence of despair, by stifled cries, by sudden bursts of passion, by floods of bitter tears, by eyes up-lifted to heaven, and by heart-rending complaints, she exhibited all the various emotions of grief. She sees a few friends; and in pure submission to Providence, consents to receive such nourishment as is just sufficient to keep life and soul together. She takes no rest; her health, before in a declining state, is visibly altered for the worse. For my part, I wish her death earnestly, as I cannot think she can survive such a loss. There is a certain gentleman†

* The prince of Condé.]

† M. de la Rochefoucault.

who is scarcely less affected: I cannot help thinking, that if they had met, in the first moments of their grief, and had been alone together, all other sentiments would have given place to sighs and tears, redoubled without intermission; there would have been a dumb scene of sorrow, a dialogue of inarticulate sighs and groans. This is a mere thought of my own. But, my dear, how great affliction is this! The very mistresses of poor de Longueville do not constrain themselves; his domestics are disconsolate; and his gentleman, who came yesterday with the ill news, scarcely appears a reasonable creature. This death effaces the thoughts of all others.

A courier, who arrived yesterday evening, brings an account of the death of the count du Plessis *, who was killed by a cannon-shot, as he was giving directions for making a bridge. Arnheim is besieged by M. Turenne. They did not attack the fort of Skeitg, as it was defended by eight thousand men. Alas! these successful beginnings will be followed with a tragical end for a great number of families. May Heaven preserve my poor son! He was not upon this expedition; but the campaign is not yet finished.

In the midst of our afflictions, the description you have given me of madame Colonna and her sister †, is really divine; it rouses one under the most melancholy circumstances: it is an admirable picture. The countess de Soissons, and madame de Bouillon ‡, are quite in a rage with these fools, and say they ought to be confined. It is thought that the king will not disoblige the constable § (Colonna), who is certainly one of

* Alexander de Choiseul, count du Plessis, son of Cæsar de Choiseul, marshal of France.

† Hortensia Mancini, duchess of Mazarin.

‡ Sisters to mesdames de Colonna and Mazarin.

§ The father of these ladies, and of one of the most powerful families in Rome.

the greatest men in Rome. In the mean time we are in expectation of seeing them arrive here like mademoiselle de l'Etoile *: this comparison is good.

The accounts I send you are from the best authority; you will find by all you receive, that M. de Longueville has been the cause of his own death, as well as of the death of many others; and that the prince has showed himself through the whole of this expedition, more like a father, than the general of an army. I said yesterday, and others agreed with me, that if the war continues, the duke † will certainly occasion the death of the prince; his love for him surpasses every other consideration.

La Marans affects to appear overwhelmed with grief. She says that she sees very plainly there is something in the news from the army, which is concealed from her; and that the prince, and the duke, are dead, as well as M. de Longueville. She conjures people, by all that is sacred, to speak out, and not to spare her; and tells them, that in her deplorable situation, it is in vain to hide any thing from her. If it were possible for us to laugh under these circumstances, we should laugh at her. Alas! if she knew how little any of us think of concealing any thing from her, and how much every one is taken up with his own griefs and his own fears, she would not have the vanity to believe we paid so much attention to her as to deceive her.

The news I send you, comes, as I before said, from good authority; I had it from Gourville, who was with madame de Longueville when she heard of her son's death. All the couriers come straight to him. M. de Longueville had made his will before he set out. He leaves a great part of his property to a son he has, who,

* In Scarron's comic romance.

† Henry Julius de Bourbon, son of the prince.

as I believe, will take the title of chevalier d'Orléans *, without expense to his relations. Have you heard how the body of M. de Longueville was disposed of? It was laid in the same boat in which he passed the river two hours before. The prince, who was wounded, ordered him to be placed near him, covered with a cloak, and, with several others who were wounded, repassed the Rhine to a town on this side the river, where they came to have their wounds dressed: it was the most melancholy sight in the world. They say the chevalier de Monchevreuil, who was attached to M. de Longueville, will not have a wound dressed which he received as he stood next to him.

I have received a letter from my son, he is very much grieved at the death of M. de Longueville. He was not in this expedition, but he is to be in another. What safety can be hoped for in such a profession? I advise you to write to M. de la Rochefoucault, on the death of the chevalier, and the wound of M. de Marsillac. This fatal event has given me an opportunity of seeing his heart without disguise: for constancy, worth, tenderness, and good sense, he infinitely surpasses any one I have ever met with; his wit and humour are nothing in comparison. I will not amuse myself at present with telling you how much I love you. I embrace M. de Grignan, and the coadjutor.

The same evening, at 10 o'clock.

I made up my packet two hours ago, and on my return to town, I found a letter for me, with the news that a peace was concluded with Holland. It may easily be imagined that the Dutch are in the greatest consternation, and glad to submit to any terms; the

* He appeared under the name of the chevalier de Longueville, and was accidentally killed at Philipsbourg in 1688, by a soldier, who was shooting at a snipe. See the Letter of the 8th July following.

king's success is beyond all that has ever been known. We shall once more breathe again; but what a cruel addition must this be to the grief of madame de Longueville, and all those who have lost children and near relations! I have seen marshal du Plessis; he is greatly afflicted, but demeans himself like a brave soldier. His lady * weeps bitterly; the countess † is only disconcerted at not being a duchess. I think, my dear child, that if it had not been for the rashness of M. de Longueville, we should have gained Holland without losing a man.

LETTER CCIX.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, June 24, 1672.

I AM now in my aunt's apartment: if you could see the situation she is in, you would not doubt that I might take my departure to-morrow. She received the viaticum to-day for the last time; but as her disorder is a complete decay of nature, the last drop of oil is not soon found. She is up, that is, she sits in her chair, in her night-gown, with a black hood over her cap, and with her gloves on: her room is perfectly free from any ill scent or discomfort, but her countenance is as much changed as if she had been dead for a week: her bones come through her skin; her flesh is quite wasted away, and shrivelled; she swallows with extreme difficulty, and is speechless. M. Vesou has told her she cannot live, and she no longer takes medicine; she is no longer bloated, because the dropsy has exhausted all the animal juices; and she is no longer in pain, because there is nothing to consume: she is very drowsy, but she still breathes: she has had fits of coldness which made us

* Columba de Charron.

† Maria Louisa le Loup de Bellenave.

think she was quite gone; and we were once upon the point of giving her extreme unction. I do not quit my station, for fear of an accident. I assure you, that whatever pleasure I have in view, this last scene will cost me many tears: it is very difficult to bear, constituted as I am. This, my child, is our present situation. Three weeks ago she gave us leave to set out, because she had a little remains of ceremony; but now the mask is taken off, she makes the abbé and myself understand by her gestures, that it is a great comfort to have us both with her in her last moments: this affects us extremely, and shows us that death is no hypocrite. I say nothing of the day of my departure:

Comment pourrois-je vous le dire?
Rien n'est plus incertain que l'heure de la mort *.

But provided you do not send us word to delay our journey, it is very certain we shall soon set out. Let us therefore manage for ourselves: you know how I hate self-condemnation; and the thought that I had neglected the last duties to my poor aunt, would be a perpetual vulture gnawing in my breast. I omit nothing I can do for her on this melancholy occasion.

I have not seen madame de Longueville; she is very ill; she has only been seen by a few distinguished personages, and I have not the honour to be one of them, nor any claim to be so. It does not appear that peace is concluded, as I informed you it was; but there seems to be a good understanding every where, and so great a readiness to submit, that the king has only to present himself before the gates of a city, and it immediately surrenders. Had it not been for the rashness of M. de Longueville, which was the cause of his own death and the death of so many others, all would have been well: but, in reality, Holland itself, Holland entire, could not com-

* How can I? nothing is more uncertain than the hour of death.

pensate his loss. Do not fail to write to M. de la Rochefoucault on the death of the chevalier, and the wound of M. de Marsillac, but be careful not to fall into an error: this it is that afflicts him: alas! my dear child, I lie: between you and me he has scarcely felt the loss of the chevalier, and is inconsolable at the death of him whom every one laments. You should also write to marshal du Plessis. All our friends are in good health. Little La Troche was one of the first who plunged into the river; he has been much noticed in consequence. If I am still here, when you write, mention the circumstance to his mother; it will give her great pleasure.

My poor aunt desired me the other day by gestures, to remember her to you, and to bid you adieu for her: she made us weep: she was very much concerned to hear of your illness. Our abbé sends a thousand compliments to you: you must write some little word of kindness to him, to keep up his earnest desire to see you. You are now at Grignan. I hope I shall be there in my turn as well as the rest. Alas! I am quite ready; I cannot help wondering at the waywardness of my fate; it is enough for me to wish a thing, to find some obstacle to it. I am perfectly satisfied with the care and friendship of the coadjutor for you, but I will not write to him; he will love me the better for it; I shall be overjoyed to see him, and converse with him.

The marquis de Villeroi is remanded back to Lyons. The king would not permit him to remain with M. de Munster. Jarzé * has had leave to stay, and get

* It was the same Jarzé who, at the instigation of the great Condé, declared a ridiculous passion for queen Anne of Austria. He had then been sent from court, and, at last, returned only to be exiled, on the charge of having taken a part in the intrigues of some women at Monsieur's during the king's illness. Menage speaks of him as being a great wit.

broken bones. You know he was exiled as well as the marquis.

LETTER CCXX.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Monday, June 27, 1672.

My poor aunt received extreme unction yesterday: you never beheld a more piteous spectacle; she just breathes, and that is all I can say: I shall soon let you know more. It is impossible to behold without emotion the painful death of a person I have always so much loved and honoured. You reason extremely well upon the subject; I shall follow your advice, and after having decided, will share the triumph with you, and set out exempt from the uneasiness and remorse I predicted: so impossible is it for our own thoughts not to deceive us. I imagined that what with sorrow at leaving my aunt, and fears for my son's safety, my heart would be torn with anguish. God has prevented the one, I shall fulfil my most sacred duties; and the king's success has provided against the other, since Holland has surrendered without farther resistance, and the deputies are at court, as I informed you the other day. Let us therefore, my child, abandon the idea that we can form just opinions of the future; and let us think of nothing but the misfortune of madame de Longueville, which, having really taken place, we cannot be deceived in. The war seems to have been waged on purpose to kill her poor son; the next moment all was peace; and in short, the king is now fully occupied in receiving deputies from the different towns that surrender. He will return count of Holland (comte de Hollande). This is a wonderful victory, and shows that

nothing can resist his forces or his command: the safest way is to honour and fear him, and never to speak of him without admiration.

I have at length seen madame de Longueville. Chance placed me near her bed: she made me draw still nearer to her, and was the first who spoke; for I never abound in words on these occasions. She said she did not doubt that I pitied her, and with justice, for her misfortune was complete. She mentioned madame de la Fayette and monsieur d'Hacqueville, as those of her friends who she imagined would sympathise the most with her: she talked of my son, and of the friendship her son entertained for him. I shall not trouble you with my replies; they were such as the nature of the conversation required; and, in fact, I was so much affected, that it was impossible to speak amiss. I was soon obliged to give place to the crowd of visitors. When I put myself in the place of this unfortunate woman, the circumstance of peace appears the most cruel blow that could have been given to the heart; when I return to myself again, I bless Heaven for it, since it is the means of preserving my dear Sévigné to me, and the rest of our friends.

You are now at Grignan; you want to terrify me, with the fear that I shall not be able to walk out when I come, and that there will be no pears or peaches left; but you, my dear child, will be there, and when I am tired of counting the boards in your rooms, shall I not have your fine terraces to walk on? Will you not give me some dried figs and grapes? Say as you please, I shall very willingly expose myself to the dryness of the country, trusting I shall meet with no other dryness. I only foresee a little dispute that is likely to arise between us, about your little boy, whom you will wish me to love better than my little girl, which I do not

think is possible, for I am so much attached to the dear child, that I feel great regret in the idea of leaving her behind.

Monsieur de la Rochefoucault is very uneasy about M. de Marsillac's wound; he is apprehensive it may terminate in a mortification. I do not know whether you should write to madame de Longueville, or not, but I think you ought. I have seen a good caricature lately on Holland, which is represented by a countess, apparently a hundred years of age, and very ill: she is attended by four physicians, which are the kings of England, Spain, France, and Sweden. The king of England desires her to show him her tongue, and cries, "Ah! what a foul tongue!" The king of France feels her pulse, and says, "She must be bled copiously." I do not remember what the rest say; but it is on the whole a very humorous and just satire.

I am extremely glad you are not with child, for now you will soon be free from all your other disorders: I do not believe a syllable of your loss of beauty. I have seen two or three Provençals, whose names I have forgotten. Provence, however, is become very dear to me: it has quite effaced my regard for Britany and Burgundy: in comparison I despise them.

LETTER CCXXI.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, July 1, 1672.

At length, my child, our dear aunt's sufferings are at an end. She has cost us many tears. I, who am so easily affected, have in particular wept profusely. She was found dead in her bed at five o'clock yesterday morning. The preceding evening she was extremely

ill, and would get up from restlessness; but she was so weak that she could not sit in her chair, and kept sinking down and falling out of it, so that she was obliged to be supported. Mademoiselle de la Trousse flattered herself that this weakness proceeded only from want of sustenance: her mouth was convulsed; my cousin said the milk she had taken had merely made her mouth uncomfortable; for my part, I believed her dying. At eleven o'clock she made a sign to me to leave her: I kissed her hand, she gave me her blessing, and I quitted the apartment. She then took a little milk to oblige mademoiselle de la Trousse, but could not swallow it. They laid her in the bed; she made every one leave the room, saying she was going to sleep. About four in the morning word was brought to mademoiselle de la Trousse that madame was asleep; upon which she ordered her not to be disturbed upon any account. At five she said she would go and see if she was still asleep: they went to the bed-side, and found her dead. Upon which a melancholy scene ensued! It was with difficulty they could disengage her daughter from the corpse: however, they contrived to carry her into another room. They next came to acquaint me; I immediately ran thither in great agitation, and found my poor aunt cold and stiff, but laid so much at her ease, that I do not think she had for six months experienced so tranquil a moment as that in which she expired: she was not at all changed. I kneeled by her, and when I had paid my tribute of tears to this mournful sight, I went in quest of mademoiselle de la Trousse, whom I found in a situation that might have melted the very stones. I brought her hither with me, and in the evening mademoiselle de la Trousse came and took my cousin home with her, from whence she proposes removing her to the family-seat, till the return of M.

de la Trousse. I am now ready to set out, having no longer any thing to detain me; and so, my dear, farewell.

I have been promised some news; I am in expectation of it: it seems the king continues the chain of his conquests. But you take no notice of the death of M. de Longueville, nor of the pains I have taken to supply you with intelligence: not a word about my letters! In short, I fancy I am writing to one deaf and dumb. But I see how it is; I must absolutely come to Grignan; your patience is worn threadbare. Our abbé sends you a thousand good wishes; I perfectly adore him for his noble perseverance in making the journey to Provence.

LETTER CCXXII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Sunday, July 3, 1672.

I AM going to take my little girl to Livri; be not uneasy on her account, I am extremely careful of her, and I certainly love her much better than you do. I shall go and take leave of M. d'Audilly to-morrow, and return on Tuesday to purchase some trifles, after which, I shall set out immediately, leaving my letter with my good La Troche, who undertakes to tell you all the news. She is much better qualified for this office than I am: the interest she has in the army gains her better information than almost any other person receives, and especially one who for four days past has been occupied with tears, mourning, masses, funerals, and even death. I own I was overwhelmed with vexation, when my servant came and told me there were no letters for me by the post; this is the second time I have been disappointed,

and though I believe it is the fault of the post, or of your journey, it does not alter my feeling: as I am not accustomed to disappointments of this nature, I bear them with very ill grace. You have been so ill that I am always fancying some misfortune will happen to you, and you have been so rash since you left me, that I have reason to fear every evil because you do not fear any. Adieu, my dearest, I would say more if I had heard from you.

LETTER CCXXIII.

TO THE SAME.

Livri, Sunday evening, July 3, 1672.

I HAVE many excuses to make to you, my dear child, for the letter I wrote to you this morning before I arrived here. I had not received yours: my friend at the post-office sent me word that there was no letter for me, and I was in perfect despair. It is now ten o'clock at night; and M. de Coulanges, whom I adore, and who is the best creature in the world, has sent me your letter which was enclosed in his packet. He dispatched his own servant with it by moonlight, judging how happy it would make me to receive it, and he judged truly. I am sorry you lost one of my packets; as they were filled with news, it puts you out of the train of affairs, and breaks the thread of your knowledge of what passes.

You must, doubtless, have had very exact accounts, by which you may understand that the Rhine was ill defended. The great wonder is that our troops swam over it. The prince and his Argonauts * were in a boat;

* The name given to the flower of the Grecian princes, who accompanied Jason to Colchis, in quest of the Golden Fleece.

and the first part of the enemy's troops they fell in with on the other side of the river, laid down their arms, and demanded quarter; but unhappily M. de Longueville, who doubtless did not hear this, hurried on to the entrenchments with warlike ardour, arrived at the barrier, and killed the first man he met. At the same instant he himself received five or six wounds. The duke followed him; the prince followed his son, and all the rest followed the prince. This occasioned a dreadful slaughter, which it is plain would have been avoided, had they known the enemy's intention of yielding. But every thing is in the disposal of Providence.

The count de Guiche performed an action, the success of which has covered him with glory; whereas had it failed, he would have been considered criminal. He was sent to ascertain whether the river was fordable or not; he said it was, though it is probable he knew the contrary. Whole squadrons swam over on horseback, without breaking their ranks: it is true, he was himself at the head of them. This was never attempted before; it succeeded; he surrounded the enemy's troops, and forced them to yield. You see that his fortune and his valour keep pace with each other. But you have doubtless had particular accounts of this daring adventure.

The chevalier Nantouillet fell from his horse into the river; he immediately sunk to the bottom, but rose again; a second time he sunk, and again he rose: at last, he laid hold of the tail of one of the horses, which brought him safe to land; he mounted it, rushed into the thickest of the battle, received two shots in his hat, and returned in high spirits. This reminds me of Orontes *, prince of the Massagetes.

* A hero in the romance of Cassandra.

It is very true, that M. de Longueville had been to confession before he went away. As he never boasted of such things, he did not even acquaint his mother with it; the confession was conducted by our friends (of Port-Royal), and the absolution was deferred for more than two months: it is so certain, however, that madame de Longueville can have no doubt of it: what a consolation this must be to her! He bestowed great sums in purposes of charity, which no one knew of, and which were given on condition they should be kept secret. No man ever possessed more solid virtues, or fewer vices, than he did. He had a little pride, vanity, and haughtiness: but certainly no one ever approached so near perfection. He was above praise; if the world was satisfied with his conduct, that was enough for him. I frequently see persons who have not yet recovered from their concern at his loss; but the generality have already forgotten it. This melancholy news was only subject of grief for three or four days; the regret of the public for the loss of Madame* continued much longer. The individual interest every one has in what passes in the army, hinders him from paying much attention to the misfortunes of others. Since the first engagement, nothing has been talked of but surrendered cities, and of the arrival of deputies to desire the favour of being received among his majesty's newly-conquered subjects. Do not forget to write a line or two to La Troche, upon her son's having distinguished himself at the passage of the river: he has been praised to the king, as one of the foremost in that adventurous affair. There is no probability that the enemy will defend himself against with a victorious army. The French are certainly very fine soldiers; every thing must yield to the brilliancy

* The princess Henrietta Anne of England, princess de Conti.

and hardihood of their actions: in short, no river can now be a defence against their all-conquering valour.

Adieu, my dearest child! Pardon the concern I have felt at having been so long without hearing from you; your letters are so agreeable, that the want of them can be recompensed by nothing but your presence.

LETTER* CCXXIV.

MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ to MADAME DE BUSSY.

Paris, June 7, 1672.

I HAD resolved, I know not why, to push my impertinence to the utmost extremity, and as I once neglected answering a letter of yours, I determined not to stop there, but to go on in the same way, so long as you did me the honour of writing to me. But in spite of this good resolution I am forced to yield. Your letter disarms me; I can no longer be so brutal, and I never expected to be so weak. I have been very much amused at what you told me, and have omitted to write to you, more from the fear of writing nothing worth reading, than the desire of offending you as I have done. Is it thus you write, madame? your style partakes of the beauties of the Rouvilles and the Rabutins: it has nothing provincial in it; and instead of apostrophising you in a letter to your husband, I shall write to him in this, if I think of it. This is a change which must necessarily surprise you. You give me a new incentive to be careful of my little shoot, and I should certainly avail myself of it, if I were not going into Provence. But I am going to see this poor Grignan. I do not know whether I shall take Burgundy in my way, but in any case, if I do not inform you of it, it will be because I shall not pass near you, and shall be unwilling

to stop. It is a long time since I saw our student. I do not retract a syllable of what I formerly said in his favour: his mind appears to me docile and amiable. I lost my aunt de la Trousse a week ago, after an illness of seven months. Her long suffering and subsequent death have made me shed many tears. I loved and honoured her sincerely. I shall not therefore give your compliments to her, but to my uncle the abbé, who highly esteems you, and is much obliged by your remembrance.

LETTER CCXXV.

MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO MADAME DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Friday, July 8, 1672.

Well, my dear child, you are now at Grignan, expecting me. I, on my side, am in all the hurry of departure; and if I were to spend the whole day in thinking and wishing, I should not see you so soon; but I am just setting out; and if I write to you again on Monday, you may be assured it will be for the last time. Be as indolent as you please now, that you may have no indolence about you at my arrival. In some respects our humours are very opposite; but in many other things, we perfectly agree: and then, as you say, our hearts answer almost to our degree of relationship.

. I have been at St. Mary to take my leave, but I had not the power to do it: for, without vanity, the delicacy of madame de la Fayette is such, that she cannot bear without emotion the loss of a friend like me; these are her own words. I went thither with M. de la Rochefoucault. We had a great deal of chat upon the road; we found madame du Plessis there, and mesda-

moiselles do la Rochefoucault, and Gourville, who, by the stroke of a magic wand, made an admirable supper spring out of the ground for us. Madame de la Fayette kept me there all night. The next day, La Troche and the abbé Arnauld came to visit me, and found me making up my packets. I bid adieu to M. d'Andilly. I have a thousand other things to do: my heart has not been so much at ease for a long time.

My son has written to me in a style, as if the campaign were finished. He says every thing has yielded to the king; that Grotius* is arrived at the camp, to conclude a treaty of peace, and the only difficult thing for his majesty, is to find enemies to oppose him. If he returns as soon as is expected, my son intends to come to us at Grignan. He says a good deal of you; when you write to him, desire him to take this pretty excursion. He has seen the chevalier de Grignan, who is well, and who told him he did not write to me often. He has never answered my last note: I will forgive him on condition he is not killed.

There are a great many ladies in tears for the death of M. de Longueville: they make the profession of grief ridiculous. They all want to converse with M. de la Rochefoucault; but he, who has a *greater fear of* being ridiculous than of any thing in the world, has sent them to seek comforters elsewhere.

La Marans affects to appear oppressed with grief. It is ten months since she has seen her sister†; they

* Ambassador from the states-general to the court of France, and pensionary of Rotterdam.

† Mademoiselle de Montalais. She was a woman of great wit, but of great intrigue. She had been, at the same time, the confidante of Madame, of mademoiselle de la Vallière, of madame de Montespan, then demoiselle de Tonnay, of M. du Guiche, of the king, &c.

are on ill terms together. She was there three days ago in a mask; and without any preamble, or even unmasking, though her sister immediately knew her, she burst into tears, and began thus: "Dear sister, I am come to beg you to tell me, how you felt upon the death of your lover. Did you weep long? Were you able to sleep? Did you feel a weight at your heart? Good God! how did you act? Was it not dreadful? How could you bear it? Did you admit company? Could you read? Did you ever go abroad? Oh! what a sad situation!" In short, my child, can you not fancy you hear her? Her sister made her such answers as she thought proper; and flew to M. de la Rochefoucault to describe this ridiculous scene to him, who would have laughed at it, if any thing could make him laugh. For our parts, we all thought it a folly worthy of her, and not inferior to that fine adventure of hers, when she went to visit the good man Andilly, fancying him to be the Druid Adamas, to whom the shepherdesses of Lignon resorted to [illegible] amorous grievances, and to receive consolation from him. I thought this history could not fail to divert you as much as it did us. Dampierre is very much grieved; but not so much as Théoban, who, on account of the death of her brother, has retired to our sisters of Sainte Marie.

Castelnau is consoled; she has been told what M. de Longueville once said to Nanon, "Deliver me, madmoiselle, from the persecution of this old [illegible]chioness de Castelnau." Upon this she has resumed her gaiety so far as to enter again into the dance, [illegible] for the marchioness d'Uxelles, her affection is that of a true friend. The [illegible] not M. de Longueville is the same

* This was a child he had by mademoiselle de la Ferté. He left him five hundred thousand livres, [illegible] years after, when Louis XIV. though

whom you have heard so much; it is one of the finest histories of our days. I trust you will not forget to write to my cousin de la Trousse, whose grief and merit, with regard to the care she has taken of her mother, are above all praise.

Let me entreat you, my dear, whatever others may say, to get some oil of scorpions * made, that we may find the remedy with the disease. I was talking of your cousins the other day, when a Provençal assured me, that they were not the only troublesome ones you had at Grignan, for that there was another kind, which, without wounding you severely, did you infinitely more harm. Methinks you look now like madame de Sotenville in the play: for you will soon have work enough upon your hands to receive a troop, that will put your pigeon-house, farm-yard, warren, and all, in requisition. But, my dear child, I only say this for want of something else to say; for if I thought you killed a pigeon more on our accounts, I should be very angry with you. You will destroy our abbé if you tempt him with varieties; your usual table is more than sufficient. La Mousse † has been a little staggered in his resolution with the fear of fleas, gnats, scorpions, bad roads, and the noise he may happen to meet with; *all these* have formed a train of hideous monsters in his poor brain, for

of acknowledging his natural children, to set the example and prepare the public for the event, they began with the child of M. de Longueville. He was in the same situation as the children of madame de Montespan, because madame de la Ferté gave birth to him during the life of her husband.

* Scorpions are very common in Provence, and in most parts of the south of France, especially in low and marshy situations. The oil made from the fat of this reptile is considered as a sovereign remedy for its bite.

† This gentleman was to be of the party with madame de Sévigné and the abbé de Coulanges, in their journey to Grignan.

which I have laughed at him very heartily; and then to hear him cry, "What a figure I shall make! Lord help me, I am nobody; I am not fit to appear in such company as we shall find there." This is what you may call proud humility. D'Hacqueville is expected here soon, but he is not likely to meet with me. I have taken care to have your compliments presented to madame de Termes; and why not? M. de Vivonne is very ill of his wounds; M. Marsillac is very little better, and the prince is almost well. I have no particular news. We are in continual expectation of peace, and of the entire conquest of Holland. It is said Nimeguen makes a show of defending itself; but it only serves for matter of laughter. I send you a pretty madrigal and the Holland gazette: the paragraph respecting the two sisters *, and that on the subject of Amsterdam, are very amusing. Adieu, my dear child: but before I seal my letter, tell me, do you think I love you?

LETTER CCXXVI.

Paris, [illegible], 1672.

Not a word more about my journey: it is so long since we have talked on no other subject, that, at last, it is become tiresome; long expectation blunts joy, as a long continuance of a pleasure does the pain of it. You will have wanted all the pleasure you would have in seeing me, by waiting so long for it. I have been obliged to [illegible] visits paid to my poor aunt; but now all is over, and I set out on Wednesday.

* Mesdames Colonne and Mazarin.

I shall sleep either at Elson or Melun. I intend to go by way of Burgundy, but shall not stop at Dijon; I must give a day or two to an old aunt, whom by the bye I do not much care for; however, I will write to you from every place where it can be done; I cannot fix the day. It is delightful weather. Our abbé is all joy and content; La Mousse is a little fearful of the length of the journey, but I will keep up his spirits: for my own part, I am overjoyed; if you have the least doubt of this, send me word to Lyons, that I may go back again.

This, my child, is all I have to say to you upon the subject. I have taken all imaginable precautions about my dear little girl. I have taken her from Livri, notwithstanding my first resolution. She is a thousand times better here. She has already given me a proof that I did well, for since her return hither, she has had a pretty little slight eruption, called the small-pox, which was attended with little or no sickness. Little Pecquet* restored her in two visits, whereas had she been at Livri, God knows how much trouble it might have cost us. If you wish to know whether I saw her during her illness, I shall assure you that I did not quit her a moment during the time; I fear infection no more than you do precipices; in short, she is now in full health, and in the midst of every kind of assistance in case of future accidents. Every one has approved my bringing her back from Livri: so all is settled. Adieu, my lovely child. Pray is M. de Grignan desirous that I should visit him in his fine castle?

* She calls him Little Pecquet from kindness. He was a great anatomist, and discovered a lacteal vein, which has preserved the name of the *reservoir of Pecquet*. He often gave brandy medicinally, but he also used it freely, and the remedy was the cause of his death.

LETTER CCXXVII.

TO THE SAME.

From Auxerre, Saturday, July 16, 1672.

Well, my child, here I am at last; I am still at a great distance from you, and yet I already feel the pleasure of being somewhat nearer to you. I set out on Wednesday from Paris, with the vexation of not having received any letters by Tuesday's post; but the hope of seeing you at the end of my long journey keeps me in spirits. Every one told me jestingly that I should kill our dear abbé, in making him take a journey into Provence during the heat of summer; but he laughed at these idle tales, and Heaven has rewarded him for it, by the finest weather that heart could wish; there is no dust; it is delightfully cool, and the days are at the longest. What can be wished for more? Our Mousse begins to take courage: we travel mighty gravely. M. de Coulanges would have been of service to enliven us a little. We have found nothing worth reading but Virgil; not Virgil *travesti*, I assure you, but Virgil * in all the majesty of the Latin and the Italian. To be completely merry, one must be with merry people: you know my way; I am as other people are, but I am never the first to begin. I am a little afraid at not knowing how affairs go in Holland; when I set out, they were between peace and war. This is the most critical juncture that France has experienced for a considerable time, both with regard to public and private interests.

* Madame de Sévigné speaks here of a translation of the Æneid into Italian verse by Hannibal Caro, which is almost the only one that has preserved the beauties of that noble author.

Adieu, then, my dear child; I hope to find letters from you at Lyons. Let me tell you, you are greatly obliged to our dear abbé and La Mousse, but not at all to me.

LETTER *CCXXVIII.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO THE COUNT DE BUSSY.

Montjeu, July 22, 1672.

You always speak wonders, M. le Comte: all your arguments are just, and it is very true that, in war, the event makes the action rash or heroic. If the count de Guiche had been beaten in passing the Rhine, the blame would have fallen upon him, for he was only ordered to ascertain whether the river was fordable, and he pronounced that it was when it was not; and it is only because the event succeeded that he is covered with honour. The anecdote of the prince of Orange delighted me. I verily believe he was right, and that the generality of young women flatter themselves. As for the monks, I did not exactly think with them, but I was not far short of it. You have given me pleasure in undeceiving me: I now begin to breathe. The king may be considered as only on a journey, and taking Holland as he passes by way of amusement. I own I never took so much interest in the war before, and the reason is not very difficult to discover. My son was not commanded to pass the Rhine. He is standard-bearer to the gend'armes of the dauphin, under M. de la Trousse. I had rather he were in that situation than a volunteer. I observed a word or two of Italian in your letter, and it appeared as if you were learning it: would it were so! You know I have always told you that this only was wanting to your accomplishments. Learn it, my

dear cousin, I beg; it will repay your trouble. Since you think me a model of discernment and taste, pray follow my advice. If you had not been at Dijon waiting the unfortunate termination of the poor count de Limoge's lawsuit, you would have been in this country when I passed through it, and you would have heard from me, as I told you, from my cousin de Toulonjon's. Madame de Toulonjon came there on Monday to see me, and M. Jeannin pressed me so earnestly to come here, that I could not refuse him. He has made up to me for the day I have given him by a relay, which will take me to-morrow to sleep at Chalons, as I had intended. I found this place very much improved since I was here sixteen years ago: but this is not the case with me, and time, which has given great beauty to these gardens, has robbed me of my youth, which I can never expect to recover. You would have restored it to me more than any one, by the pleasure I should have had in seeing you, and by the merriment we are sure to have when we meet. But Heaven has decreed otherwise, and Jupiter too, who has contented himself with placing me on his mountain, without letting me see all my family. Madame de Toulonjon, my cousin, is pretty and amiable. I did not think she had been so well made, nor that she had so good an understanding. She has told me a great many pleasing things of your daughters, which I readily believe. Adieu, my cousin, I am going into Provence to see my poor Grignan. See what it is to love. I wish you all the happiness you deserve.

LETTER CCXXIX.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO MADAME DE GRIGNAN.

Lyons, Wednesday, July 27, 1672.

If this date does not please you, I know not what to do for you. I received your two letters yesterday by madame de Rochebonne *. I never saw so surprising a likeness; in short, it is M. de Grignan himself, in the person of a most agreeable woman: she perfectly adores you. I shall not tell you how much I love her, nor how much I can believe you love her. As to her brother-in-law †, at whose house I take up my abode while in this place, he is absolutely captivating; such ease, such freedom reigns about him, as perfectly suits with my temper, and makes me charmed with him. The intendant ‡ with his lady, and madame de Coulanges, came to receive me at the boat: I supped with them, and dined there yesterday. They walk with me, and show me every thing that is worth seeing: in short, I am quite ashamed at receiving so many attentions; I cannot conceive what it is that makes them so much esteem me. I would fain have set out to-morrow, but madame de Coulanges insisted upon another day, as the condition of her coming to Grignan: I readily acquiesced, certain that this arrangement would be agreeable to you; so I shall not leave this place till Friday morning: we shall sleep at Valence. I have good sailors, at

* Theresa Adhémar de Monteuil, countess de Rochebonne, sister to M. de Grignan.

† M. de Chateauneuf, canon, count, and chamarier (or chamberlain) of the church of St. John of Lyons; brother to the late count de Rochebonne, commandant for the king in the Lyonnois.

‡ M. du Gué-Bagnols, father to madame de Coulanges.

least, I desired not to have yours, who are great knaves: they receive charges about me as if I were a princess. Saturday, about one o'clock in the afternoon I shall be at Robinet*, at least, as the chamberlain tells me. If you leave me there, there I shall stay. I shall not mention a word of my excessive joy. Our dear abbé is well; it is to him that all our compliments are due. La Mousse is still alive. We wish to be with you every moment, and my heart flutters when I think of it.

My equipage came thus far without accident or inconvenience, but yesterday I had the misfortune to lose one of my horses, which was drowned at the watering-place. I have now only five, so that I am afraid I shall disgrace you; but it is not my fault. I have had a great many compliments of condolence upon my loss, but I support it with heroism. Madame de Coulanges advises me by all means to stay and spend my summer here; she says it is ridiculous to think of going farther, and so would have me content myself with sending you my compliments. I wish you could hear her when she is saying all this. She will certainly come and see us, if it is only to raise your spirits. Adieu, my dearest child; your little girl is very well; she is at Paris, taken great care of, and more visited and attended than I am: it was a good thought of mine to leave her there: I love her dearly. But here comes madame de Rochebonne! I kiss her, and think I am kissing her brother†; for which reason, I shall send him no remembrance this time. Oh, what a pleasure it is to be upon the road to you, my dear countess!

* A landing-place about two leagues distant from Grignan.

† M. de Grignan.

LETTER CCXXX.

TO THE SAME.

From Marseilles, Wednesday, —— 1672.

I SIT down to write to you, my dear, after having had a visit from the intendant's lady, and a very beautiful harangue. I am now expecting a present, and the present expects my pistole. I am enchanted with the singular beauty of this place. Yesterday was a heavenly day; and the spot * from whence I had a view of the sea, the bastides, the hills, and the town itself, surpass every thing I have ever seen. But what delights me more than all the rest, is madame de Montfuron †: she is really a charming woman, and it is impossible not to love her. A crowd of chevaliers came here to receive M. de Grignan ‡ at his arrival; names that were known, and names that were unknown; knights-errant, long swords, smart cocked hats, a spice of war, of romance, of embarkations, disembarkations, adventures, chains, slavery, captivity, and captives; all this, to one of so romantic a turn as I am, is inexpressibly delightful. M. de Marseilles paid us a visit yesterday evening, and to-day we are to dine with him. I tell you the affair is as good as done. The weather is so very bad at present, it makes me dull: we can see neither the sea, the galleys, nor the harbour. With all due respect to Aix, Marseilles is a very charming town, and more populous

* This place is, in the language of the country, called La Vista, and is greatly admired for the beauty of its prospect.

† Mary de Pontevez de Buous, wife of Léone de Valbelle, marquis de Montfuron, and first cousin to M. de Grignan.

‡ M. de Grignan had come thus far to meet his mother-in-law, and conduct her to Grignan.

than Paris: it has, at least, a hundred thousand inhabitants; how many beauties there are I cannot pretend to tell, for I have neither time nor leisure for the calculation. The air in general is thick, so that, upon the whole, I had rather be with you. No place can please without you; and Provence surely less than any other. Thank God that you possess more courage than I do; but do not despise me for my weakness, nor laugh at my chains.

LETTER CCXXXI.

TO THE SAME.

Marseilles, Thursday, —— 1672.

THE devil is certainly let loose in this town; such dreadful weather was never known in the memory of man! I wonder more than ever at the manners of some people, who are so ostentatiously civil and obliging in all outward things, and yet refuse me what I have most at heart: this is embracing while they strike a dagger into the breast. They thought to dazzle my senses; but in the midst of my civilities, I show them that I can see, and I believe they would laugh as heartily at the farce as myself, if they dared do it: it is all masquerade. We dined yesterday with M. de Marseilles, and a very good entertainment we had. He took me in the afternoon to pay the necessary visits, and left me here at night. The governor gave us some good music: after which we had some humorous masks, among whom was a very pretty little Greek girl. Your husband surveyed her. Ah! my dear, he is a sad rogue: if you were at all disposed to resentment, you would never look on him again. There is a chevalier de Même, who in my opinion dances delightfully; he

was in the character of a Turk, and it is said he does not hate the pretty Greek. I think with you, that Bétomas is very like Lauzun, and madame de Montfuron like madame d'Armagnac, and mademoiselle de Peunes like the late mademoiselle de Cossé. We are always talking of Paris, and of our friends there, with every body who knows it. If there should be an hour of sunshine presently, M. de Marseilles is to take me to gape about. So much for Marseilles and your absence; in the meanwhile I cannot help putting my hand to my head. La Santa Cruz* is handsome, fresh-coloured, gay, and unaffected; there is nothing false nor borrowed in her appearance. I desire you will think in time of paying her your compliments, not forgetting to praise her rigadoon, in which she excels. Farewell, my lovely child: the reflection of not seeing you dance among us, absolutely spoils every thing of the kind, to me.

LETTER CCXXXII.

TO THE SAME.

Marseilles, Thursday night, at 12 o'clock.

I WROTE to you this morning, my dear. I now proceed to give you an account how I have passed my time since. I went to mass at the church of St. Victor with the bishop†; from thence we went on board the Reale‡, saw the exercise there, the flags flying, heard the guns fired off, and saw feats of activity performed by a Turk; then we dined; and after dinner away went the bishop

* N. de Galéans, marchioness de Forbin Sainte Croix.

† Of Marseilles.

‡ The admiral-galley, so called.

and I, cheek by jowl, to see the citadel, and the prospect from thence; then we visited the arsenal, and saw all the magazines, and the hospital; then we walked round the harbour; and afterwards returned to supper at the prelate's, where we had all kinds of music. We had a conversation together, in which I said all I thought proper, and without any rudeness, incivility, or anger. I represented to him, coolly and dispassionately, the monstrousness of his proceedings: I told him how much more agreeable to me it would have been, had he given me a real proof of his friendship at Lambese, instead of loading me with ceremonies and entertainments here at Marseilles, which he must be sensible could only amuse the public. He seemed a good deal confused; and, in fact, the more distant the thing becomes, the more he sees it in its true light. There can be no excuse for not obliging me in such a trifle, when he himself, had he had the least regard for me, might have found a thousand reasons for it, to one objection against it. I repeated to him how plainly he discovered his dislike to us on that occasion: for, said I, the pretext was so poor, that it was easy to see through it. At last we parted: but be assured of this, that had we been the best friends in the world, he could not have done me more honours at this place. To-morrow at five o'clock we shall set out; and so I take my leave of you for the present, my dear. I have received your letter, and read all the affectionate expressions it contains with sentiments that cannot be expressed.

LETTER CCXXXIII.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO MADAME DE GRIGNAN.

Lambese, Tuesday morning, 10 o'clock, 1672.

WHEN we reckon without Providence, we must frequently reckon twice. I was dressed from head to foot by eight o'clock; I had drank my coffee, heard mass, taken leave of every body, the mules were loaded, and the tinkling of their bells gave me notice that it was time to mount my litter; my room was full of people, entreating me not to think of setting out on account of the heavy rain which had fallen incessantly for several days, and was then pouring more violently than ever; but I resisted all their arguments, resolving to abide by the promise I made you in my letter of yesterday, of being with you by Thursday at farthest: at that very instant, in came M. de Grignan in his night-gown and slippers, and talked to me very gravely of the rashness of such an undertaking, saying that the muleteer would not be able to follow the litter; that my mules would fall into some ditch on the road; that my people would be so wet and fatigued, that they would not be able to lend me assistance; so that I changed my mind in a moment, and yielded to his sage remonstrances: and now, my dear child, the trunks are brought back, the mules are unharnessed, the footmen and maids are drying themselves by the fire, for they were wet through in only crossing the court-yard; and I dispatch you this messenger, knowing your goodness will make you uneasy, and wishing to lessen my own uneasiness, being very anxious about your health; for this man will either bring me word here, or meet me on the road. In short, my dear, he will be with you at Grignan on

Thursday instead of me; and I shall set out the first moment it pleases God and M. de Grignan, who is become absolute master of me, and well knows my reasons for wishing so much to be at Grignan. I should be glad if this affair could be kept a secret from M. de la Garde, for he will take a most unmerciful pleasure in finding every thing turn out as he foretold; but let him take care, and not grow vain upon this pretended gift of prophecy.

Adieu, my dearest child; do not expect me; I will come and surprise you. Believe me, it is much against my will that I am detained prisoner at Lambesc: but who could foresee such dreadful rains as have not been known in Provence for the last century?

LETTER CCXXXIV.

FROM MADAME DE COULANGES TO MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Lyons, August 1, 1672.

I HAVE received your two letters, my lovely friend, and return you a thousand thanks for thinking of me in the place where you are. The weather is dreadfully hot; I have no hope but from its violence *. I long to be at Grignan; after this month, it will be out of the question; so you may depend on it I will come, if I am alive.

The poor marquis de Villeroi daily regrets his misfortune in not having seen you. We have the violins every evening in Belle Cour †. I am seldom there, being obliged to be a good deal with my mother. You must know I discharge my duty to a miracle, in the

* Agreeably to the proverb, "Whatever is violent seldom lasts long."

† A public place in the city of Lyons.

hope of getting to Grignan: this idea puts me in good humour. But we have had strange alterations here. Do you remember the figure madame Solus made while you were here? She has imprudently taken a fancy to madame Carle. The latter, it is said, had her views in encouraging it; for my part, I do not believe a syllable of the matter; however, it is the talk of Lyons. In short, it has come out, that it is madame Carle with whom the marquis is in love. Madame Solus is in despair; but she had rather see the marquis, faithless as he is, than not see him at all: so that it is thought there is no danger of her throwing herself into a convent. What think you of this story? does it not carry an air of novelty with it?

Adieu, my dearest friend. I forgot to tell you, that the marquis de Villeroi intends to visit Grignan, with your friend the count de Rochebonne. I am extremely obliged to you for wishing me with you: there are few things I more earnestly desire than to see your castle as soon as possible. My patience, *though violent*, still continues; I hope the heat will not do so: it must be great indeed to prevent my setting out. The rapidity of the Rhone accords with the desire I have of embracing you; and so, my dear friend, I do not despair of relating to you in person all the diversions of Belle Cour. You have promised not to say to me, *Allez, allez, vous êtes une laide**; and that is enough for me. I am afraid you will use our governor ill: your manners have always appeared to me somewhat different from madame Solus's. You know it has been reported at Paris that she and Vardes met: guess in what place.

* Begone, begone, you are hideous.

LETTER CCXXXV.

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

Lyons, Sept. 11, 1672.

I AM rejoiced, my dear friend, to find that I have reason to believe you regret my absence; and what confirms the belief to me, is the uneasiness I feel at being no longer with you *. I have made your compliments to *the charmer* †, which he received very properly. I am satisfied with him. Pray send Corbinelli to me; his apartment is quite ready, and I expect him with an impatience that claims this little journey of him: all our beauties too expect him, and will not set out for the country till he comes. If he abuses my credulity, and all this turns out to be a mere project, I shall break with him for ever. Adieu, my dear friend; I have a little business with the countess de Grignan.

TO MADAME DE GRIGNAN.

I HAVE no longer any taste for working, madame; it is only at Grignan that I can work. *The charmer* and I, indeed, began a work two days ago, in which you had a considerable share. I assure you, if you were here, you would find me a great workwoman at present. I had fancied *the charmer* was to send you some patterns; but report says, you never work from patterns yourself, and that those you give are inimitable. Adieu,

* Madame de Coulanges had made a journey to Grignan to see madame de Sévigné and her daughter, and this letter appears to be written soon after her return.

† This was a name given to Francis de Neuville, marquis, afterwards duke, de Villeroi, peer and marshal of France.

dear madam; I find it very easy to divest myself of all form when I write to you.

LETTER CCXXXVI.

FROM MADAME DE COULANGES TO MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Lyons, October 30, 1672.

I AM very uneasy about you, my charming friend; will you never leave off this strange notion of your being so robust? Surely it was not a time to think so after having just been bled. I am impatient to hear from you, and yet it will be long before I can have that satisfaction. Alas! this is a farewell letter, my dearest friend; I am going to take a journey that will carry me more than a hundred leagues from you! What folly! Since the day has been fixed for my departure for Paris, I am almost distracted to think of what I must leave behind me: I leave my family, my poor afflicted family; and yet I must set out on All-Saints' day for Bagnols, from thence to Rouen, and then *vogue la galère*, happen what will.

Are you not charmed with the present the king has made M. de Marsillac *? Are you not delighted with the letter he wrote to him? I am now in the 20th book of Ariosto, and am in raptures with it. Let me tell you, without intending to abuse your credulity, that if I were received into your party at Grignan, I could much better dispense with Paris and its diversions, than in Paris I can dispense with you. But, my true friend, I must bid you adieu. I shall keep *the charmer* for the fair countess.

Come, my dear confidant †, come hither, and let me

* Of the office of grand-master of the wardrobe.

† This is addressed to M. Corbinelli.

take my leave of you; I cannot be happy that I did not see you; it is of little avail to reflect on the pain it would have given me to part with you again; I had rather have undergone that, than the vexation of not having had an opportunity of convincing you of my sentiments towards you. I am delighted with M. de Grignan's talent for mimicry; this talent is necessary to represent probability. Adieu, my dear sir; though you promise to be my confidant, I grieve that I am not worthy to accept your offer; but come, and take your denial at Paris. Adieu, my friend; adieu, my lady countess*; adieu, M. Corbinelli; I have the pleasure of being with you in imagination, however distant from you in reality; but, alas! I feel lively sorrow at the certainty of not finding either of you where I am going.

I will not omit to tell you, that I am so much pleased with the abbacy the king has bestowed on the coadjutor, that I think it is uncivil not to compliment me upon the occasion.

LETTER CCXXXVII.

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

Paris, December 26, 1672.

THE siege of Charleroi† is at length raised: I shall not inform you of the particulars of this affair, as I know mademoiselle de Meri has sent madame de Grignan a full account of it. It is not yet known what route his majesty will take; some say he will return directly to St. Germain; others that he will go into Flanders; we shall soon, however, be informed of his march. I can

* Madame de Sévigné.

† The prince of Orange was obliged to raise the siege of Charleroi the 22d of December.

affirm, with truth, that I have the first intelligence; for the couriers all stop at M. le Tellier's *, where I spend the greatest part of my time; he is indisposed, and seems to take pleasure in having me with him; this is sufficient to make me diligent in my attendance on him.

I cannot conceive by what accident you missed receiving M. de Coulanges's letter, in which I had enclosed one from myself. The loss indeed is not great, but yet I flatter myself you regretted it, because I love you, my dearest friend; and I know you are not ungrateful.

I have been at mass at midnight, and have eaten supper afterwards. I am in such robust health at present, as to be a mate for you. I have paid some visits in company with madame de la Fayette; I am delighted with her, and I think she contrives to bear with me. Madame de Richelieu is here yet; I shall sup with her to-night at madame du Fresnoi's. The latter is in great esteem at court; nothing of consequence passes in the state without her having a share in it. The life madame Scarron leads surprises every one; not a creature without exception has any intercourse with her. I have received a letter from her, but am very cautious of mentioning it, lest I should draw a torrent of impertinent questions upon me. The rendezvous of the beau monde is held every evening at the maréchal d'Estrées'. Manicamp and his two sisters are excellent company. Madame de Senneterre sometimes joins the party, but always like the figure of Andromache: her grief is become troublesome; I cannot help thinking she likes it better than she did her husband: this reason ought per-

* Madame de Coulanges was niece to M. le Tellier, who was afterwards chancellor of France.

haps to make her forget her affliction: but I believe her to be in earnest, and therefore pity her. The dauphin's gendarmes are in the army of the prince: it is to be hoped they will soon be put into winter quarters, and that they will have a little time to arrange their affairs: I know some persons who are overwhelmed with them. Well, I must take my leave of you, my dearest, to prepare for the important occasion of the night. I assure you we must be very attentive to our dress when we sup with madame du Fresnoi. Permit me to make my compliments to madame de Grignan; it should be my love, but you will not suffer that.

The princess d'Harcourt has appeared at court without rouge, from pure devotion: this is a novelty which effaces every other, and it may be called a great sacrifice. Brancas* is delighted at it. He adores you, my friend; do not find fault with him, therefore, for censuring the pleasure you enjoy without him: it is jealousy that leads him to it, but you will not have jealousy except from those of whom you can be jealous: pity poor Brancas.

LETTER CCXXXVIII.

FROM MADAME DE LA FAYETTE TO MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Paris, December 30, 1672.

I HAVE seen your long letter to d'Hacqueville; I perfectly understand all you say respecting the bishop†. I am convinced he is in fault, since you complain of him. I shall show your letter to Langlade, and have a

* Charles de Brancas, father of the princess d'Harcourt, and knight of honour of queen Anne of Austria.

† Of Marseilles.

great desire madame du Plessis should see it too, for she is very much prejudiced in favour of the bishop. The Provençals, you know, are strange people.

I send you a packet for lady Northumberland. You will not easily guess how I came to have charge of it: it comes from the earl of Sunderland, the English ambassador; he has written to her several times, but having received no answer, is apprehensive that his letters are intercepted; and M. de la Rochefoucault, whom he frequently visits, has taken upon him the conveyance of the packet in question: I must, therefore, beg the favour of you, as you are no longer at Aix, to send it by some person you can trust, and at the same time to write to lady Northumberland, desiring her to inform you whether she has received it safe, and to consign her letter in reply to the packet to your care. It is said lord Montagu's journey has not succeeded as he could have wished, so that he will proceed to Italy, to show the world that lady Northumberland's fine eyes were not the only motives that induced him to travel. Pray let us know what you perceive of this affair, and how you think it will end.

La Marans is fallen into a state of devotion, penitence, and meekness of spirit, that is almost inconceivable: her sister, though not much attached to her, is surprised and charmed at it. Her person is so altered, you would scarcely recognise her; she looks as if she were sixty years of age. She was very angry with her sister for having told me what she said to her about M. de Longueville's child, and complained of me for having made it public; but her complaints were so gentle, that Montalais was embarrassed both for herself and for me; and to excuse me in some way, she told her that I was acquainted with the strange opinion she had entertained of my being in love with M. de Longueville.

La Marans replied very justly, that if I were really acquainted with it, she was surprised I had not said much more, and that she thought I had the most reason to complain. Madame de Grignan was mentioned; she said a great many handsome things of her, and without the least affectation. She no longer suffers any one to come near her; if God confirms this happy disposition in her, it will be one of the greatest miracles I have ever seen.

I went yesterday to the Palais Royal with mademoiselle de Monaco, where I caught a dreadful cold. I shed many tears of real sorrow to the memory of Madame *. I was greatly surprised at the wit of the present one †; not so much for the sprightliness of her humour as for the good sense. She was rallying the ridiculous conduct of M. de Meckelbourg, in being in Paris at such a time as this; and I assure you no one could have expressed what she said better than she did. She is very obstinate and determined, and is certainly a person of discernment, for she cannot bear mademoiselle de Gourdon. Monsieur paid me all the attentions possible just under the nose of madame de Clerembault ‡; however, I was kept in countenance by La Fienne, who mortally hates her, and whom I had invited to dine with me two days before. It is generally believed that the countess du Plessis § is going to be married to young Clerembault.

* Henriétta-Anne of England, who died June 29, 1670.

† Elizabeth-Charlotte, princess palatine of the Rhine, whom Monsieur, only brother to Lewis XIV., took for his second wife the 21st of November, 1671.

‡ Governess to the children of Monsieur.

§ Mary-Louisa le Loup de Bellenave, relict of Alexander de Choiseul, count du Plessis, married a second time to René Gillier de Puygarreau, marquis of Clerembault, and first gentleman of the horse to the duchess of Orléans.

M. de la Rochefoucault sends you a thousand compliments. He has kept at home these four or five days, having the gout in miniature. I have told madame du Plessis that you write me wonders of her son. Adieu, my sweet friend; you know how much I love you.

LETTER CCXXXIX.

FROM M. DE LA ROCHEFOUCAULT TO MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Paris, February 9, 1673.

You cannot conceive the pleasure you gave me by the most entertaining letter that was ever written: it has been read with all the admiration you could desire. I shall find it a difficult task to acquit myself so well of the obligation; however, I will do my endeavour, but without the hope of succeeding, by any charges with respect to your health, for you are so fortunate as to stand in no need of my prescriptions.

The countess de la Fayette is gone this morning to St. Germain, to thank the king, for a pension of five hundred crowns that he has granted her on an abbey, and which in time will be worth a thousand to her; for it is upon a man who has the same pension on the abbey of Fayette, so that they are quit for the present; but upon the death of the former, the pension remains on his abbey: his majesty accompanied this gift with so many kind expressions, that it gives us reason to think he intends to confer still greater favours on her. If I am the first to acquaint you with this piece of news, I think I have half repaid M. de Coulanges's letter; but who can repay us for the weary moments we pass in your absence? The loss is so great to me, that nothing but your presence can make up for it: but you are not very ready at paying such debts. These are not

the first I have lost by you; and being an old creditor, exposes me the more to these bankruptcies. The affair between the chevalier de Lorraine and M. de Rohan has terminated happily; the king gave them credit for their intentions, and there is no room for any one to be offended. The duke is returned. The prince is to follow in two or three days. We live in hopes of peace; but, alas! you do not return, and that is enough to destroy all hope.

Notwithstanding what you tell me of madame de Grignan, I cannot believe she often thinks of me. I return her or you, however, my most humble thanks, for what you are pleased to say to me from her. My *mother* * is become a perfect mirror of devotion; she has composed a hymn for her enemies, in which the *queen of Provence* † is not forgotten. Embrace the abbé ‡ for me; tell him that, next to the marquis of Villeroi, I stand better than any one in the good graces of M. de Coulanges.

If you have any news of our poor Corbinelli, I beseech you to let me know it. I was thinking to strike out the epithet, but I learn, to the eternal shame of our friends, that he has but too good a title to it.

FROM MADAME DE LA FAYETTE.

This letter, my friend, will inform you of all I had to tell you. I am quite well after my trip to Saint Germain. I saw your son, and treated him as well as if he had been my own: he is very handsome. Adieu.

* Madame de Marans, whom M. de la Rochefoucault always called his mother.

† Madame de Grignan, whom madame de Marans hated.

‡ De Coulanges.

LETTER CCXL.

FROM MADAME DE COULANGES TO MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Paris, February 24, 1673.

If you were in a place where I could impart all my vexations to you, my dear and charming friend, I am persuaded they would be at an end. When I reflect, that the return of madame de Grignan depends entirely on peace, as your return depends on her, can I do otherwise than long for this happy event? Count Tot passed the afternoon here; we talked much of you; he remembers all he has ever heard you say; judge then, if his memory does not render him an excellent companion.

I no longer think, my dear, of leaving St. Germain. I met one of the ladies of honour * there, for whom I have a great affection, and who behaves in the kindest manner to me. I seldom see the queen: I sleep at madame du Fresnoi's in a delightful apartment; which determines me to make frequent excursions thither. Our poor friends are gone again, that is, M. de la Trousse †, who has been ordered, with Vauban, into Franche Comté, on the king's having received news of an insurrection there. He has appointed them to the command, being unwilling to suffer the Spaniards to send troops through his dominions. La Trousse is not easily reconciled to the honour conferred on him, though doubtless it is one that could not fail of being agreeable to a person less wearied with travelling than he is. The

* Madame de Richelieu.

† Captain in the dauphin's gen-d'armes.

guidon * continues with us. I took him with me the other day, to dine with madame de Richelieu: he is almost as much beloved by every one as by me. Mithridates † is a charming piece: it affects you to tears, and calls forth continual admiration; you see it twenty times, and like it better the twentieth time than you did the first. Pulcheria did not meet with the same success.

Our friend Brancas has a fever, and a defluxion on the breast; I shall see him to-morrow. I have not seen your cardinal ‡ yet, though I have always wished to do it; but something or other has continually happened to prevent me. The marquis de Villeroi is so much in love, that he sees only with other people's eyes; never surely was blindness equal to his; every body pities him: in short, he is rather the *charmed* than the *charmer*. He sets no value upon his fortune; but his fair one sets some value upon Caderousse, and upon one more, and so on to two, three, four, &c. This is absolute truth; you know I abhor scandal. I embrace madame de Grignan; I heartily wish she were safely brought to bed, and as heartily wish she would never be with child again: and, lastly, that she would come hither, and put every one out of countenance that is now the object of admiration.

My ever dear friend, farewell! *your little heart* § is very well; it is very saucy; it has had its hair cut, and is drest very prettily.

* M. de Sévigné, who was guidon, or cornet, in the dauphin's gend'armes.

† A tragedy of Racine, which was represented for the first time in January, 1673.

‡ De Reta.

§ A name given by madame de Sévigné to her little grand-daughter, who was born the 15th of November, 1670.

Madame Scarron never appears now; I am extremely sorry for it, for I have no one here this year that I love. The abbé Têtu and I are compelled to love one another. Mademoiselle dreamt you were very ill, and awoke crying; she desires me to tell you so.

LETTER CCXLI.

FROM MADAME DE LA FAYETTE TO MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Paris, February 27, 1673.

M. DE BAYARD, and M. de la Fayette, are this moment arrived; so, my dear friend, I have only time to say two words to you about your son: he is just gone from hence, and desired me at parting to let you know his reasons for wanting a supply of cash. They are so very good, that I need not take much time to explain them to you at large. In a word, you see what expense you are to expect from a campaign that is likely never to have an end. Every creature is in despair, and running to ruin, and it is impossible but your son must do like the rest; besides, the great love you have for madame de Grignan will not suffer you to neglect her brother: but I leave the great d'Hacqueville to tell you more on this subject, and bid you for this time heartily farewell.

LETTER CCXLII.

FROM MADAME DE COULANGES TO MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Paris, March 20, 1673.

I WISH your reproaches too much to deserve them; no, my beauty, exaggeration does not bear me away: I tell you I love you, because I feel truly that I do; and

my affection is even stronger than my expressions. We have, at last, found our friend madame Scarron, in other words, we know where she is; for as to having any intercourse with her, that is not quite so easy. A certain gentleman (M. de Coulanges) who visits at the house of one of her friends, thinks her so amiable, and such excellent company, that he cannot bear to be absent from her. She is more solicitous about her old friends than ever; and obliges them so freely with all the time she has to spare, that they regret she has not more to bestow on them. I am certain you think the pension of two thousand crowns very moderate; it is so; but then the way in which it was bestowed, gives reason to hope for something better hereafter. The king had been looking over the pension-list, and finding madame Scarron down for two thousand francs, he struck out that sum, and in its room put two thousand crowns.

Every body imagined we should have peace: but then the hopes of every body are again destroyed by a word that escaped the king, that, peace or war, he would not return to Paris till the month of October. I have just received a letter from the young guidon *, in which he desires me † to procure him his discharge; and his reasons are so good, that I do not doubt I shall obtain it for him. I have seen an excellent letter of yours to M. de Coulanges: it is so replete with good sense and good reasoning, that I am persuaded it would be a bad undertaking for any one who should attempt to answer it. I promised madame de la Fayette yesterday that she should see it: I found her tête-à-tête

* M. de Sévigné.

† Madame de Coulanges was cousin-german to Louvois, the secretary at war.

with a personage called M. le Duc: they regretted your departure from Paris, and wished you back again; but, alas! how fruitless are wishes, and yet we cannot help forming them. M. de Grignan is not at all rusticated by Provence; he has a very good air at court, but he finds something wanting; we are of the same opinion, and think something is wanting to him. I have informed M. de la Trousse of what you write me of him: if my letter reach him, he will no doubt thank you: I believe the wonderful secret he possessed of making as great a show as the richest among us, has failed him on this occasion: he appears to me overwhelmed without resource.

Madame du Fresnoi makes such a figure as would surprise you: she has eclipsed mademoiselle de S**** without mercy: who hearing the beauty of her rival so amazingly cried up, has never shown her face abroad. She is certainly a very fine and regular beauty, has an admirable complexion; but then she is bashful, though she does not like it to appear: she is always laughing, but it is with an ill grace. Madame will never want a succession of new beauties at her court: the least shadow of gallantry makes her immediately part with her maids of honour. I fancy those who stay with her think themselves worse off than those who have left her. Mademoiselle de Laval is on the point of leaving her: madame de Richelieu desires me to make you many compliments in her name. Adieu, my lovely friend; with your permission and her own, I take the liberty of embracing the countess of Grignan: is she not brought to bed yet? M. de Coulanges has promised me to send you Mithridates. I am to sit to-day for my picture, for M. de Grignan: for my part, I had given over all thoughts of such sittings.

The charmer's story is really very pitiable; I know it

all; Orondates * was nothing to him: he is the only one in the world that truly knows how to love: he is certainly the most deserving of men, and his Alcina the most unworthy of women.

LETTER CCXLIII.

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

Paris, April 10, 1673.

It is now midnight, which is a reason for my not writing to you: I am vexed to the heart: I had resolved to answer your delightful letter, but was prevented thus. M. de la Rochefoucault spent the whole day with me: I introduced him to madame du Fresnoi, and he was quite charmed with her. I am extremely glad to hear madame de Grignan suffers now only from lassitude: the uneasiness I felt on account of her disorder, has made it the greatest joy to hear of her recovery: it is truly barbarous to wish her children.

But I must not forget what happened to me this morning: a footman wanted to speak with me from madame de Thianges. What d'ye think was his message? "Madame," says he, "I come from madame de Thianges, who begs the favour of you to send her the letter about madame de Sévigné's horse, and that about the meadow." I told him I would bring them myself to his mistress, and so I got rid of him. Your letters have all the reputation they merit, as you may see. They are certainly very charming; and you are no less so than your letters. Adieu, my dearest friend! I embrace the countess gently, for fear of hurting her. My wishes are stronger than my hopes, that she may

* The hero of a romance.

never be exposed to former accidents. The king said yesterday, that he would set out on the 25th, without fail.

LETTER CCXLIV.

FROM MADAME DE LA FAYETTE TO MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Paris, April 15, 1673.

LADY Northumberland called upon me yesterday; I had been to see her with madame de Coulanges. She seems to me to have been a very handsome woman; but there is not a feature of beauty remaining in her face, nor the slightest appearance of youth, at which I am greatly surprised: add to this, that she dresses badly, and without the least taste. In short, I was not at all captivated with her. She seemed to understand every thing that was said to her; or rather that I said to her; for M. de la Rochefoucault and madame de Thianges, who had a great desire to see her, did not come in till she was going. Montagu sent me word he would be with us: I have talked a great deal to him about her: he has declared himself her humble servant, without the least reserve. M. de Chaulnes set out yesterday, as did count Tot; the latter greatly mortified at being obliged to quit France. I have seen him almost every day since he has been here: we have had several conversations, of which your ladyship was the subject.

The maréchale de Grammont is ill. Our friend d'Hacqueville has been two or three times backward and forward, to carry her medicine: he is in reality a little too abundant in his attentions.

Adieu, my dear friend. My blood is so heated, and I am so much out of sorts with the bustle and noise I have had to encounter, for the last two or three days,

that I am perfectly exhausted. I long to see you, to cool my blood. Adieu.

LETTER CCXLV.

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

Paris, May 19, 1675.

I SHALL go to-morrow to Chantilli. This is the same journey which I began last year, when the fever seized me at Pont-Neuf *. I know not whether any thing will happen to hinder my completing it again. We shall be the same party as then, and no more.

Madame du Plessis was so charmed with your letter, that she sent it to me for my perusal. She is set out for Britany at last. I have given your letters to Langlade, who seemed highly pleased with them: he always expresses great esteem for madame de Grignan. Montagu is going. It is said, that he will find all his hopes baffled. I have a notion there is something a little wrong in the mind of the nymph †.

Your son is desperately in love with mademoiselle de Poussai. He wishes only to be as mad as Le Fare. M. de la Rochefoucault says, that it would be his greatest ambition to die for love that he did not feel; for you must know, we none of us consider him made of the wood by which the strong passions are kindled. I am quite disgusted with Le Fare's love; it is beyond all bounds, and makes him a perfect slave: his mistress does not return his sentiment for her in the slightest degree. She went to a ball and supper at Longueil's the very night he set off. Now to go to a public entertainment the night a lover departs, and for the army too, appears to me an

* A bridge over the river Seine at Paris.

† Lady Northumberland.

unpardonable crime; I may however be mistaken. Adieu, my dear.

LETTER CCXLVI.

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

Paris, May 26, 1673.

If I had not the head-ache, my dear, I would give you an account of my journey to Chantilli, and tell you that no place under the sun is equal to it. The weather was not very favourable, indeed, while we were there; but then the pleasures of the chase, which we followed in our carriages, fully made up for it. We staid there nearly a week, and wished you had been with us, not so much on account of our friendship for you, as from knowing how much you would have admired and enjoyed the beauties of the place. At my return, I found two letters from you. I could not get mine finished on Friday, nor shall I be able to finish it to-day, which vexes me, because it seems so long since I had the pleasure of chatting with you.

In answer to your questions, I have to inform you, that madame de Brissac * is still at the hôtel Conti, attended by very few lovers, and those not at all calculated for making a noise, so that she does not stand much in need of St. Ursula's cloke. The first president of Bourdeaux is passionately in love with her: you know his head is but indifferently furnished. M. le Premier and his children are also very attentive to her. Lord Montagu has not, I think, seen her this trip, for fear of displeasing lady Northumberland, who sets off to-day. Montagu has been gone these two days; so

* Gabriel-Louisa de Saint Simon, duchess of Brissac.

that, all things considered, there seems no reason to doubt that they will soon be married. Madame de Brissac still continues to act the woe-begone, and affects a great negligence of her person. The countess du Plessis went into waiting as lady of honour only two days before the departure of Monsieur; her mother-in-law * could never be brought to consent to it before. She does not elbow madame de Monaco; I suppose she thinks as she ought to do, that the second place about Madame is certainly good enough for the wife of Clerembault; which she will doubtless be shortly, if she is not already.

M. de la Rochefoucault, Morangis, Coulanges, and I, are going to dine at Livri. There is something very odd to me in dining at Livri without you. The abbé Têtu is gone to Fontevraud; I am mistaken, however, if it would not have been better for him to have staid away, and if this journey will not displease some folks, whom he had better not displease.

It is said that madame de Montespan is left at Courtrai. I have had the pleasure of a short letter from you: if you have not received any from me, it is solely on account of the bustle I have been in: I would tell you all my reasons if you were here. The duke finds time very heavy upon his hands at Utrecht. The women of that country are hideous. The following story is told of him. It seems he was taking liberties one day with a young woman of that place, I suppose by way of amusing himself; but as his freedoms went rather too far, she said to him, "Upon my soul, monseigneur, your highness is pleased to be rather too insolent." I had this from Briole. I thought you would be as much pleased

* Colombe de Charron, wife to César duke of Choiseul, peer and marshal of France, and first lady of honour to madame d'Orléans.

with it as I was. Adieu, my charming friend: I am truly yours.

LETTER CCXLVII.

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

Paris, June 30, 1678.

WELL, well, my dear; what reason is there for all this outcry? I desired you to suspend judgement till you came here; and pray what is there so very terrible in these words? My days are wholly occupied; I have scarcely an hour to myself. It is true, Bayard is here, and takes a great deal of business off my hands: but when he has been running about all day in my service, can I write? I must talk a little to him. When I have been running about all day myself, and come back, I find M. de la Rochefoucault, whom I have not seen during the day: can I write? Perhaps he and Gourville are with me: can I write? "But when they are gone." Oh! when they are gone, it is almost twelve o'clock; and then I have to go out, for I sleep at a neighbour's at present, because they are building just opposite my chamber-window. "But in the afternoon." Why, in the afternoon I have the head-ache. "In the morning then." Why, in the morning I am still worse, and take herb tea that intoxicates me. You are in Provence, my dear friend, your time is your own; and what is more, your head is clear. You love writing; I hate it; and if I had a lover that expected a note from me every morning, I should certainly break with him. Let me beg you then not to measure my friendship by my writing; I shall love you as well, though I write you but a page in a month, as you love me in writing to me ten

times in a week. When I am at St. Maur *, I shall be better able to write; for my head and hands will be more at liberty: but I have no time to go there. I have spent but a week there all this year, though Paris destroys me. If you knew how much I might make my court to some people, with whom it is very necessary to keep well, by sending them now and then a little nonsense, and how negligent I am in this respect, you would readily own that I have it not in my power to do as I would in this respect.

This very day three years I saw poor Madame expire. I have been reading over some of her letters: in short, I can think of nothing but of her. Adieu, my dearest friend; you have but one fault, and that is your distrust of your friends; it is the only thing that I dislike in you. M. de la Rochefoucault will write to you.

LETTER CCXLVIII.

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

Paris, Wednesday, July 4, 1673.

I GIVE you here a true account of all that has happened to me since I wrote to you. In the first place I have had two fits of my ague. It is above six months since I took medicine. Well, they gave me two doses. The day after the second dose, as I took my seat at the dinner-table, I felt myself on a sudden very unwell. I can eat no soup, said I.—Well then, eat a little meat.—No,

* She occupied a part of the castle. Gourville, who lent her the apartment, states in his memoirs, as much to her discredit as it appears to be true, that she endeavoured to keep possession of it in spite of him, and that she exerted herself, when she was obliged to give it up, to ruin him with M. de la Rochefoucault.

I do not choose any.—Then you will eat some fruit.—Perhaps I may.—Why don't you then?—I cannot at present, I may by and by; let me have some broth and some chicken for supper.—Night came, and up came the broth and the chicken:—Take it away, I cannot touch it; the sight of food makes me sick; I'll go to bed; I have more inclination to sleep than to eat.—Well, to bed I went; I turned first on one side, then on the other; I was not ill, but I could not sleep: I rang the bell, called for a light, took a book, and read a little, then laid it down again; at length daylight appeared; I got up, put on my clothes, and went to the window: four o'clock, five o'clock, six o'clock struck; I went to bed again, slept till seven, rose at eight. At noon I sat down to table, but to no purpose: in the evening I went to bed, as I did the night before, but to no purpose. Are you ill?—No.—Are you faint?—No.—In this state I continued for three days and three nights. I have recovered my sleep a little, but not my appetite; I eat only by artifice, as they make horses do, by rubbing my mouth with vinegar: in other respects I am well, and my head-ache is better than usual.

I have just been writing nonsense to monsieur le Duc. If I am able, I intend to go next Sunday to Livri for a day or two. I am ready to love madame de Coulanges for your sake. Are you resolved, my dear, to oblige me to use my rhetoric to maintain, that my love for you is greater than yours for me? I would make Corbinelli own it in a quarter of an hour. Pray let me hear something about him. Are all our good wishes for this poor man to be of no avail? It is my opinion that he owes all his ill-fortune to his merit. Segrais is one of those too who carry their ill-luck about with them. Madame de Thianges has a great friendship for Corbinelli, so has madame Scarron, so have a thousand

people besides, and yet he does not seem to have the least shadow of hope of getting any thing done for him: pensions are given to men of wit and learning: it is a fund appropriated to them alone: he has a better title than any of them, and yet no news, nothing can be obtained for him.

I am to see madame de Vill*** to-morrow. She is a ridiculous creature, and has had a child by M. d'Ambres, for which she has sued him, and lost her cause. She tells every body her adventure, with all its circumstances; she pretends he used violence; you may suppose this leads to some very entertaining particulars. La Marans is a perfect saint: I am not jesting: this is to me a miracle. La Bonnetot is become religious too; she has thrown away her glass eye, and left off *rouge* and curls. Madame de Monaco does not follow her example: she is become a favourite of this Madame as she was of the other. This is odd enough. Langlade sets out to-morrow for Poictou, where he is to stay for two or three months. M. de Marsillac is here; he goes on Monday to Barège: he has not the use of his arm yet. The countess du Plessis is going to be married. Her ladyship has some thoughts of purchasing Frêne. M. de la Rochefoucault is well, and sends a thousand and a thousand good wishes to you and Corbinelli. I give you a question to solve between two maxims †.

> We may forgive a breach of faith, but we cannot forget it:
> We may forget a breach of faith, but we cannot forgive it.

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† The manner in which the words and the sense are here played upon, seems to justify a critique that has been made on Rochefoucault's Maxims: "In many articles, the expression has not been invented by the accusation, but the accusation has been invented to introduce the expression." Huet, who says this, knew better than any one the author of the Maxims, his method, and the charms of his society.

"Had you rather be unfaithful to your lover, and yet continue to love him; or that your lover should be unfaithful to you, and yet continue to love you?" Observe that "unfaithful" does not mean to leave one lover for another, but to have committed some great fault against him. Adieu, you see I am got into a train of talking: this is the effect of not eating or sleeping. I embrace madame de Grignan, and all her perfections.

LETTER *CCXLIX.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO THE COUNT DE BUSSY.

Grignan, July 25, 1673.

You see plainly, my dear cousin, that I am at Grignan. I have been here exactly a year: I wrote you conjointly with our friend Corbinelli, who spent two months with us, since which time I have taken a walk into Provence. I passed the winter at Aix with my daughter. She was very near death at her lying-in, and I equally near death at seeing her in so much danger. We returned here a fortnight ago: I shall remain here till September, when I mean to go to Bourbilly, where I hope to have the pleasure of seeing you. Arrange matters for this purpose immediately, that you may not be at Dijon. I wish also to see our great cousin de Toulonjon there: tell him so. I shall perhaps bring our dear friend Corbinelli with me. He came here to meet me, and we resolved to write to you as soon as I received your letter. With respect to manners, you will find him just the same as ever; but he knows his religious duties better than he did, and his punishment will be the greater, if he does not profit by his knowledge. I still love him; his turn of mind is exactly calculated to please me. What say you to the

conquest of Maëstricht? The king alone has the glory of it. Your misfortunes affect me so painfully, that they make me feel how much I love you. I resign the pen to our friend. We should be too happy if we could have him with us at our delightful castle of Bourbilly. My daughter sends her love to you, though you did not remember her.

FROM M. DE CORBINELLI.

It is very necessary, sir, that the report of my devotion should continue: the contrary report has so long prevailed, that the change would perhaps favourably affect my fortune. This devout turn is ascribed to me merely because I am convinced that both the happiness and misery of mankind is the pure effect of Providence, without fortune having any share in it. I express myself so often in these terms, that they have been taken for the sentiment of a true Christian, though it is only that of a true philosopher. But even if the report which has prevailed were true, my devotion would not have been incompatible with my perseverance in honouring you, and often expressing to you the same sentiments which I have felt for you all my life. You know how proud I have always been of your friendship, and can judge whether saving grace could destroy so rational a feeling. We wrote a long letter to you on our first journey here, and have talked twenty times of your indolence. But does it extend so far as to lead you not to regret that you were not at Maëstricht killing the Dutch and Spaniards in sight of the king? What say you? The poets are going to write wonders on the occasion, and the subject is ample and grand. They will say that their august sovereign conquered Holland and Spain in twelve days, by taking Maëstricht, and nothing will be wanting to his glory but the truth. They will say he

is himself the destroyer of his renown, by rendering it incredible, and a thousand other things which do not occur to me, because I have at best not a very flowery imagination, and the little I could boast has been rendered still more barren for the last twelvemonth by my devoting myself to the philosophy of Descartes. This philosophy appears to me the more noble, as it is easy, and admits nothing but bodies and motion in the world; never tolerating any thing of which we have not clear and precise ideas. His metaphysics also please me; his principles are easy, and his inductions natural. Why do you not study this philosophy? It would highly amuse both you and your daughters. Madame de Grignan is perfect mistress of it, and reasons upon it divinely. She maintained the other day, that the more indifference there is in the soul, the less liberty it possesses. This proposition is very pleasingly supported by M. de la Forge, in a Treatise on the Human Mind, written in French, which I very much admire. Such studies as these would dissipate the dulness of the country. We read Tacitus all the winter at Montpellier, and I assure you we translated it very tolerably. I have written a treatise on Rhetoric, and a commentary on Horace's Art of Poetry *. Would to God you were here, for the Provençals have not understanding enough to satisfy us in our reflections. Let us hear from you sometimes, if you please, and be assured, that if I were in Paradise, I should not be less your obedient servant.

* It is in this work, no doubt, that he gave the new explanation which drew upon him the ill-will of Boileau.

LETTER * CCL.

TO THE SAME.

Grignan, August 27, 1673.

I AM very glad, my dear cousin, that you are at Paris. This appears to me to be the road to preferment, and I have never wished any one so much to obtain great honours as I wished them to you, when you were in the way of Fortune. She is so fantastic, that there is nothing we may not expect from her caprice; so I always live in hope. You have so much philosophy, that I shall some day ask you to impart a small portion to me, to help me to bear your misfortunes, and my own vexations. I comfort myself for not seeing you at Bourbilly, in the idea that we shall meet at Paris. I wish my daughter could pay her respects to you there herself, but as this is uncertain, she desires me to do it here, and so does M. de Grignan.

LETTER CCLI.

MADAME DE LA FAYETTE TO MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Paris, September 4, 1673.

I AM now at St. Maur; I have left all my business and all my husbands; I have taken with me only fair weather and my children, which is as much as I want. I take care of my health, and drink the waters of Forges. I see nobody, but I do not mind that; every one seems so devoted to pleasures, and to pleasures that depend wholly upon other people, that I think it a gift of the fairies that I am as I am. I do not know whether madame de Coulanges has informed you of a conversation

that passed one afternoon at Gourville's, when madame Scarron and the abbé Têtu were there, about persons who have a taste above or below their understandings. We ran into so many subtleties, that we were quite bewildered. If the air of Provence, which is so apt to subtilise every thing, should so operate upon your mind with regard to these notions of ours, you will be quite in the clouds. "You have a taste above your understanding, and so has M. de la Rochefoucault, and so have I, but less so than either of you." These are examples for your direction.

M. de Coulanges tells me your journey is put off again; provided you bring madame de Grignan with you, I shall not complain of this; but if you do not, I shall think your absence too long. My liking increases rapidly for the abbess of Calvaire: I hope she will make me good. Cardinal de Retz has gained my displeasure for ever, for having refused me permission to reside with her. I see her almost every day, and have at length seen her face*; it is pleasing, and has still the remains of beauty: she is only forty years of age, but the austerity of her order has very much changed her. M. de Grignan has done wonders in writing to La Marans; I was not so civil, for I went the other day to call on madame de Schomberg†, and did not even inquire for her. Adieu, my beauty, I long for your return with an impatience worthy of our friendship.

I received the five hundred livres some time ago. Now money is so scarce, it seems a shame to take it of

* The nuns of Calvaire always wear their veils down in the parlour, except with near relations, and in particular cases.

† Madame de Schomberg, and madame de Marans, lodged in the same house.

our friends, so pray make my excuses to M. l'Abbé* for what I have received from him.

LETTER CCLII.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO MADAME DE GRIGNAN.

Montelimart, Thursday, October 5th, 1673.

This is a dreadful day, my dear child; I own I can scarcely support it. I have left you in a situation that adds to my sorrow. I think of every step I take, and every one you take; and that were we to continue travelling in this way, we should never meet again. My heart is truly at rest when I am near you: it is then in its natural state, and the only one in which it takes pleasure. What passed this morning has given me the most poignant uneasiness, and caused a tumult within me, which your philosophy will not be at a loss to account for. I have felt, and shall long feel it. My heart and mind are full of you; I cannot think of you without weeping, and I think of you incessantly. This state is not to be borne: as it is extreme, I hope its violence will destroy it. I seek you continually, and I seem to have lost every thing in losing you. My eyes, that have so often for these fourteen months dwelt on you with delight, no longer behold you: the endearing time I have passed, renders the present more painful, till I am a little accustomed to it, but I shall never be sufficiently accustomed to it not to desire ardently to see and embrace you again. I have no reason to hope more

* De Coulanges.

† This was the day on which madame de Sévigné left Grignan to set out for Paris, as did madame de Grignan at the same time on her journey to Salons and Aix. Montelimart is only three or four leagues from the family-seat of Grignan.

from the future than the past. I know what I have already suffered by your absence: and I shall now be still more to be pitied, since I have imprudently made your presence necessary to me. It seems to me as if I did not embrace you sufficiently at parting; what was there to hinder me from doing it? I did not tell you how satisfied I am with your affection. I did not recommend you enough to M. de Grignan; I did not thank him sufficiently for all his attentions and kindness to me; but I expect that he will continue to give me proofs of it on every occasion: there is one in which his own interest is more concerned than mine, and yet I am the person most affected by it.

I already begin to be devoured with expectation. I hope for no consolation but from your letters; and yet I know they will only make me sigh still more deeply. In short, my dear child, I live but for you. Would I loved God with equal fervour! I am continually thinking of the pigeons. I am made up of Grignans, and all that belongs to them. Never was journey so dull and melancholy as ours: not a word passes. Adieu, my dear child; pity me for being thus torn from you! Alas! here are we again at our letter-writing! Assure the archbishop of my tenderest respect, and embrace the coadjutor for me: I recommend you to his care. We have dined once more at your expense. But here comes M. de Saint Géniez to comfort me.

LETTER CCLIII.

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

Valence, Friday, October 6, 1673.

My only pleasure consists in writing to you. The indolent coadjutor is astonished that this can be an amuse-

ment. You are now at Salons, my poor child; you have passed the Durance, and I am arrived here. I examine all the roads you are to pass through this winter, and make my remarks upon such as appear the most dangerous. The safest way of travelling in the winter is in a litter; for there are some places where you must get out of your carriage, or have your neck broken. M. de Valence * sent me his carriage with Montreuil and Le Clair, that I might travel more comfortably. I waited on him as soon as I arrived. We had a good deal of chat together: your merit and his misfortunes were the principal subjects of conversation: he seems a man of understanding. He has two female relations with him.

I paid a short visit to the sisters of Sainte Marie, and to your sister-in-law †, her charming abbess is dying; there is great interest made to succeed her. I supped at Le Clair's with Montreuil, where I lodge. M. de Valence and his two nieces came to see me, most fantastically drest.

It is reported here that the king is gone to join the prince: not a word now about peace. My heart beats violently, when I think you will perhaps not come to Paris. I *cook* ‡ incessantly, and talk very little. As for our abbé, you know he delights in nothing but *les beaux yeux de sa cassette* §. Oh! how I long to hear from you! it seems already an age since I saw you.

* Daniel de Cosnac, bishop of Valence, afterwards archbishop of Aix.

† Maria Adhémar de Monteil, sister of M. de Grignan, one of the nuns at Aubénas.

‡ *Je cuis*, by this expression madame de Sévigné means that she broods over her melancholy.

§ *The beautiful eyes of his casket*, an expression of the miser in the Avare, a comedy of Molière's.

LETTER CCLIV.

TO THE SAME.

Lyons, Tuesday, October 10, 1673.

I AM already, my child, at a dreadful distance from you. Oh! did you but know the grief the thought of it gives me! I was received at the chamarier's * by himself and his sister: I found my heart much affected while I was embracing that lovely woman; she seemed no less so on her part. We talked a good deal. I immediately began to defend M. de Grignan's cause. The chamarier did not know the true state of the affair. It is the best in the world to defend, and can never suffer but by being ill explained, or misunderstood.

Let me tell you once more, that if you wish to avoid the dangers that will attend your journey this winter, you must get out of your carriage as often as I have done; but a litter would be better, and a horse better still. Mesdames de Verneuil and Arpajon have travelled in this way. M. de Veruille's carriage broke down last year. There is another road too, which they made us take across the Rhone. I alighted, my horses swam over, and the water came in at the bottom of the coach: this place is about two leagues from Montelimart. When you come, the river will not be passable; so that you must go through some fields, and not venture the passage: I assure you the danger is more than imaginary. My affection and foresight oblige me to give you these precautions: you may laugh at them if you please, but I fancy M. de Grignan will not laugh at them. You will tell me, I suppose, that every thing goes on as we could wish, that we are going to have a speedy peace,

* Chamarier is a dignity in the cathedral church of St. John of Lyons.

and then away for Paris! Very true; but even if war should be declared against Spain, it will be a work of time, and not likely to give any immediate employ to those who have governments. I think it would be good policy for M. de Grignan to come to court, and the sooner the better. I expect letters from you this evening: when I have received them I shall close my packet.

Tuesday night.

I could not receive your letter without shedding a torrent of tears. I see you at Aix overwhelmed with melancholy, completely destroying your strength of body and mind. This thought breaks my heart: I think I see you fly from me; you disappear, and I behold you no more. I am aware of the dulness my departure must have occasioned you: you do not know what to do without me; you have been accustomed to see me continually revolving round you. It is an addition to our grief to see the places again where we have been happy. It is true, I have never been in company with you on any of these roads; but when I passed them last, I was full of joy and transport at the thought of seeing and embracing you; now that I am on my return, I feel a deadly grief at my heart, and I envy my former feelings: how different are my present ones! I had hoped to bring you back with me; you know by what arguments and in what accents you cut short that hope. I could not but feel the force of your arguments, and admire you for them; but nothing in the world has so unnatural a look as to see me returning to Paris alone. If I were sure you would come to us this winter, I should be contented and happy; in that case I should only grieve for three months, agreeably to your desire: but I leave you; I am going still farther from you: all this I perceive, but I know nothing of the future. I have a continual desire to receive your letters; it is a

melancholy pleasure, but I interest myself so warmly in every thing you do, that I cannot live without knowing it. Do not forget your little cause, nor omit to count on your fingers the sheep of your flock; do not put the pot too soon over the fire, lest the contents boil away: the idea of an olio * pleases me, it is better than only one sort of meat: like you, I add but one thing to mine, which is bitter succory; it must be good, however, for the health; for, except being so ugly that no one here knows me, I never was better in my life.

It was a great pleasure to me to embrace our dear madame Rochebonne: I can endure nothing but what is Grignan. I shall answer our mother of Saint Mary. I have spent the day with those of the society who are here. To-morrow I set out for Burgundy; here is another great satisfaction to me; I shall not receive any of your letters but by way of Paris; let them be directed to M. de Coulanges there, and he will take care and send them to me at Bourbilly. Adieu, my ever amiable child: you would have me judge of your heart by my own; I do so, and therefore I both love and pity you.

LETTER CCLV.

TO THE SAME.

From a little miserable village, six leagues from Lyons, Wednesday evening, October 11, 1673.

I AM just got to this place, which would make me melancholy if I were not so; there is nothing to be seen; it is a perfect desert: but I can write to you, and that

* A sort of pottage or ragout which was brought over from Spain, and is composed of a variety of herbs and meats.

is the only amusement I wish, when absent from you. Pray tell the coadjutor, to rouse his jealousy a little, that Chamarande lives about a league from hence, that he is lord of five or six parishes, and is waiting for his majesty's return. I know a great deal more news, but I will not intrust you with it. I left Lyons this morning about eight o'clock, surrounded by all the Rochebonnes, whom I love and esteem highly. Monsieur de Rochebonne is going to pay a visit to his estates, and set every thing in order to follow the army if called upon. It is impossible to travel more sorrowfully than I do. This is the fourth time I have written to you: without this consolation what would become of me? But the worst is, that after my first sleep, I hear the clock strike two, and, instead of going to sleep again, I put the pot on the fire with the bitter succory, and it boils till day-light, when it is time for me to be in my carriage. I am certain that it is merely to make me happy respecting you, that you tell me the air of Aix has restored you, and that you are not so thin as when you were at Grignan. I will not believe a word of it, my poor child; every thing adds to my uneasiness: the noise of the streets, to which you are unaccustomed, and all the bustle I see: in short, I follow your every step; I see you go out, I see you come in; I even see your thoughts; and when I am no longer occupied with every thing that concerns you, my heart will cease to beat.

We saw some excellent pictures at Lyons. I blame M. de Grignan for not accepting the one the archbishop of Vienna would have made him a present of. The picture is of no use to him, and it is as fine a one as can be painted. I was so completely deceived, that I wanted to fasten up the canvas which I thought was unnailed. A propos, the archbishop is brother-in-law

to madame de Villars, and behaved with the greatest civility. Adieu, my dearest child; you write to me so affectionately, that you wound while you delight my heart.

LETTER * CCLVI.

TO THE SAME.

Chalons, Wednesday evening, Oct. 13, 1673.

What a vexation to have no longer the hope of hearing from you! this circumstance augments my grief. I will not tell you, my child, all my wretchedness upon this subject; you would only laugh at me, and you know how much I prize your esteem. I honour therefore your strength of mind and your philosophy, and will only confide my weakness to those who are as weak as myself. I am going out of the high road, and shall no longer write to you so regularly: this is another of my griefs. When you do not receive my letters, be assured it has not been in my power to write to you; but with regard to thinking of you, I do nothing else: I *cook* incessantly, and you know how I amuse myself with picking the roots of my succory, so that my soup is as bitter as what we used to take at Grignan.

The declamations of Quintilian have amused me; some are very fine, and others very poor. I am going to begin the Christian Socrates. I saw M. de Paule's son at Mâcon; I thought him handsome; he resembles the *charmer*. I know of no news, except that madame de Mazarin and her husband are in a perfect phrensy. The duchess of York † is expected at Lyons: what a pleasure, that she is not thrown upon you! We met M.

† Marie d'Est, princess of Modena, afterwards queen of England.

de Sainte-Marthe upon the road; he has promised to send you Marigny's * Consecrated Bread and Funeral, of which I have said so much to you; the Funeral always delights me; the Consecrated Bread wants too many explanations: if your mind is at ease when you receive this little work, and it is read to you well, you will like it much; but if you are not in good humour, it will be thrown away upon you, and despised: I find that the value of most things depends on the state we are in when we receive them. I embrace M. de Grignan affectionately; he ought to be convinced of my regard for him by my giving him my daughter and leaving her with him: all I ask him is to be careful of your heart and of mine: he knows the way. I shall esteem it a favour, if he obliges me to love him eternally. Chance made me mention him yesterday, as well as his noble and elegant manners, and his greatness of mind: I wished he had been behind me, and you also: you will readily believe this, my dear countess.

LETTER CCLVII.

TO THE SAME.

Bourbilly, Monday, Oct. 16, 1673.

At length, my dear child, I am arrived at the old mansion of my forefathers. I have found my beautiful mea-

* There is farther mention of this poet, who often exhibited more buffoonery than humour, and more ribaldry than wit, who was employed in the time of the Fronde to write what were called *Mazarinades*. From the cardinal he passed to the great Condé, whom he followed even to the Spaniards. Blot, with whom he is generally associated, and who was attached to Gaston d'Orléans, had considerably more talent. The Consecrated Bread, of which madame de Sévigné here speaks, is a burlesque poem on the churchwardens of Saint-Paul, who wanted to oblige him to surrender. Ménage says, it is his best composition.

downs, my little river, and the pretty mill, in the same places where I left them. These walls have afforded pleasure to better people than myself, and yet I am almost dead with grief, when I think of having left Grignan to come here: I could now weep heartily, if I were to give way to my sorrow; but I follow your advice, and endeavour to get the better of it. I have seen you here, my dear child, with Bussy, who used to amuse us so highly. Here it was that you called me *mother-in-law*, with such a pretty air. They have lopped the trees before the gate, which has made the walk up to the house very pleasant. We abound in corn here, but no money. It rains in torrents. I have been so little accustomed to these storms of late, that I am really angry at them. M. de Guitaut is at Epoises: he is continually sending here, to know when I arrive, that he may come and fetch me. But that is not the way to do business. I shall pay him a visit, and you may judge that the conversation will turn upon you; I desire you will make yourself quite easy about what I shall say to him; I am not very imprudent; you shall hear from us both. I cannot dispense with seeing you; if you really love me, you will give me a proof of it this year. Adieu, my dear child, I am but this moment arrived, and am rather fatigued; when I am a little settled, I will write to you again.

LETTER CCLVIII.

TO THE SAME.

Bourbilly, Saturday, Oct. 21, 1673.

I ARRIVED here Monday evening, as I immediately informed you. I found letters from Guitaut, which had been waiting for me some time. The next morning, at

nine o'clock, he came here full gallop, wet as a drowned rat, for it rained incessantly. We had a great deal to say to each other: he talked much of you, and afterwards gave me an account of his own affairs, and of the reasons he had to be dissatisfied; he told me that the king is returned from Versailles, and many particulars respecting the war: he is of opinion, that it is M. de Grignan's interest to come to court, and justify his conduct, as well as to take his majesty's orders from his own mouth, relative to the operations of the war, in case it should be declared. All this he told me without any intention to flatter my wishes, or from any views of interest on his side; for he seems little disposed to return to Paris this winter.

After we had made a good dinner, considering where we were, a coach and six drove into the court-yard; Guitaut burst into a loud laugh; and whom should I see alight, but the countess de Fiesque and madame de Guitaut, who ran and embraced me! I cannot express to you my astonishment at seeing them, nor the joy that Guitaut seemed to take in having thus agreeably surprised me. In short, the countess is at Bourbilly, can you believe it? more beautiful, more healthy, more magnificent, and more lively, than you ever saw her. After mutual exclamations on both sides, which you will readily conceive, we sat round the fire, and talked of you; here again, you will easily guess the nature of the conversation, and the surprise of the countess, when she found I had not brought you back with me. In short, they all expressed the warmest esteem for you; and then we conversed on the news of the day.

Guitaut informed me, that Monsieur is resolved to make mademoiselle de Grancey dressing-woman to Madame, in the room of La Gourdon, who is to have a present of fifty thousand crowns; but this seems attended

with a good deal of difficulty, for marshal de Grancey will not part with that sum, except as a marriage-portion to his daughter; and as he is apprehensive that he shall have a demand for the same sum when he comes to dispose of his daughter, he is resolved that Monsieur shall be at the whole expense. Madame de Monaco has the management of this affair: she is on good terms both with the duke and duchess, and equally respected by them, only that it is a little disgusting now and then to see her bestow all those little caresses and speeches on the present Madame, which she did on the last. I have heard of some other extraordinary things at court, but they are not writeable. Madame de Marei * left Paris merely from prudential motives, when the collections and entertainments began, and retired into Burgundy; she was received at Dijon by a discharge of cannon. You may guess what a number of fine comments that circumstance gave rise to, and in what a light this journey appeared to the public; the truth is, she had a cause depending at Dijon, which she wanted to have decided; but, however, the rencounter was pleasant enough. The countess is very diverting upon this subject: she has been about a fortnight at Epoises; she came there from Guerchi. A certain little obscure fellow said one day, that the abbé Têtu had soul enough for a large body: this diverted me extremely. At length, night surprised us in the midst of our chat, and after having admired all the curiosities of the place, they went away. They would fain have taken me with them, but I had too much business of consequence to attend to. I shall not go to Epoises till to-morrow, and shall re-

* The sister of madame de Grancey. It appears that she was of the parties that frequented the duke of Bourbon's, which made her suspected of coming to Dijon merely in quest of that prince.

turn the next day. We shall write to you all together; if you had come with me, you would have had the pleasure of meeting these good people, who would have kept you from being dull, I will answer for it.

As for the air here, there is no breathing in it without growing fat; it is moist and thick, and admirably calculated for restoring that humidity which the air of Provence had dried up. I shall finish all my business to-day: if you were in want of corn, I would offer you some of mine; I have above 20,000 bushels to dispose of, and yet I cry famine in the midst of all this plenty. However, I have secured purchasers for as much as amounts to 140,000 francs, and renewed my leases without any abatements. This is the whole of what I had to do, and I have had the honour of finding out expedients which escaped the abbé with all his wisdom.

I am vexed beyond description at not being able to hear from you, and at not having it in my power to serve you: this situation is hardly bearable; I hope it will alter for the better. Bussy is still at Paris, gaining ground every day; he began by madame de la Baume. Time, the impertinent meddler who changes every thing, will perhaps improve his fortune. You will be glad to know that before he set out, he and his whole family equipped themselves in the newest style of fashion at Semur: judge how well he will look. He is reconciled in this country with Jeannin, and the abbé Fouquet *.

I have just received a packet from Guitaut, with news which you shall have in your turn. He is to come to fetch me to-morrow or Monday. I embrace M. de Grignan, and assure him he would pity me, did he

* These two personages played in the Amours of the Gauls, the first, a ridiculous, and the second, a scandalous character: the abbé was the brother of Nicholas Fouquet the superintendent.

know what I suffer while absent from you. As for you, my dearest child, I embrace you with a tenderness that it is not given to every one to feel.

LETTER CCLIX.

TO THE SAME.

Epoisses, Wednesday, Oct. 25, 1673.

I DID not finish all my business at Bourbilly till Monday, when I came here, where I was expected with the greatest impatience. I found the master and mistress of the house as hospitable as ever, and the countess *, who dresses smartly, and enlivens all the country round her. I brought with me M. and madame de Toulonjon, who are no strangers here; we were afterwards joined by madame de Chatelus, and the marquis de Bonneval, so that the party is complete. This is a large handsome house; M. de Guitaut takes great pleasure in making it as elegant as possible, and spares no expense for that purpose. He has nothing else to do with his money. I pity those who cannot do the same. My host and I have talked a great deal; I have the art of setting people a-going, and of attending to what they say. One might stay here a long time without being dull; you have been greatly praised among us. I do not think I should ever be for leaving it, if I could hear from you here; but the state of ignorance in which I am respecting you, almost distracts me. I puzzle my brains to think what you may have written to me; and what may have happened to you in three weeks; in short, I can have no rest for thinking of you. I shall certainly find five or six letters from you at Paris. I

* De Fiesque.

cannot conceive the reason why M. de Coulanges has not sent them to me here, as I desired him to do. However, I set out to-morrow on the road to Paris, where I shall not arrive till the eve of All-Saints. I am told that the roads already begin to be dangerous in this province; I say nothing to you about the war, which some say is already declared, while others, who are of the ministerial party, will have it that every thing tends to peace; a little time will clear all up. M. d'Autun is in this country; I have not seen him, but he is very near us; and I have seen several who have been happy enough to have received his benediction. Adieu, my dear, my lovely child; I do not meet with a person who does not think you have reason to love me, from the great love which they see I bear you.

LETTER CCLX.

TO THE SAME.

Augerre, Friday, Oct. 27, 1673.

I LEFT Epoises, and the company that I told you was there, yesterday. I was just nine days in Burgundy, and I may say that my presence and the abbé's were very necessary at Bourbilly. I had a great deal of conversation with Guitaut, who amused me mightily by informing me of certain circumstances relating to his affairs, that I was before ignorant of; it is always good to hear both sides of a question: I was gratified, by having an opportunity of restoring him to my good opinion, which had been a little impaired by the stories I had heard concerning him, and which might have gone greater lengths, had I not been prepossessed in his favour by the openness of his countenance. I always thought him honest and sincere; and I find the only

reason of his being dismissed from the Hotel de Condé, was on account of his giving umbrage to some personages there, and that such a favourite as himself was by no means pleasing in so small a court. There are some very extraordinary events in his romance; it seems as if it would end in a retreat to his castle; I am not willing, however, to be too certain of this.

The countess told me some admirable things about the Grancey family *. There is something very curious in the plan of that house; but I beg that all jealousies keep silence in presence of the person † who is one of the actors in this comedy. He is the very quintessence of jealousy; he is jealousy itself; I wonder there was any left in the world, after the extravagant portion that fell to his lot. I should take great pleasure in talking over all these things with you; they are very amusing. Every one speaks of war; but d'Hacqueville says there have been some wagers laid that we shall have peace. God grant we may.

I wish much, my child, to know how you are; I fear you give way to your natural disposition, and absorb yourself in melancholy. Our good abbé is very well, thank God; I am not a little proud of it; he salutes you affectionately; he wants much to hear something of you, and to know whether you remember the advice he used to give you, at the hazard of being hated for it, which, however, did not deter him. I embrace M. de Grignan; pray make my compliments to the archbishop, if you are at Salens; and assure the coadjutor, that in expectation of the time when, as he tells me, I am to love him so much, I love him a good deal.

* It was said that the duke was in love with the eldest daughter of marshal de Grancey, and Monsieur with the youngest. These ladies, from their great beauty, went by the name of the *angels*.

† Monsieur le Duc.

LETTER CCLXI.

TO THE SAME.

Moret, Monday night, Oct. 30, 1671.

I AM now very near Paris, my child; but if it were not for the hope of finding letters there from you, my arrival would give me very little pleasure. I am continually thinking of what I have to do for you; of all I have to say to Brancas, La Garde, the abbé de Grignan, d'Hacqueville, M. de Pomponne, and M. le Camûs; I foresee no pleasure to myself, but what I derive in some way or other from you. I really merit that my friends should beat me and drive me back again. Ah! would to heaven they would do so! Perhaps I may get the better of this humour, and my heart, which is at present such a slave to sorrow, may recover a little its liberty; but it can never do otherwise than long passionately to see you: in the mean time, to talk of you shall be my only delight, the favourite employment of my time; but I will select my company and my subjects; I am sufficiently acquainted with life, to know, that what is pleasing to some people, is disagreeable to others. I have not quite forgotten the world; I know how tenderly and kindly it enters into the feeling of others, and I beg you therefore to trust to me, and fear nothing from the excess of my affection. If my foibles, and the unjust measures I have taken, have sometimes given offence to my love, I conjure you, my child, to excuse them in favour of their cause. I shall preserve this cause most religiously as long as I am in being, and I hope without doing it wrong to make myself less imperfect than I am: I endeavour daily to profit by my reflections, and if I could live as I have told you, two hun-

dred years, I should be a wonderful personage at the end of that period.

If M. de Sens * had been in his diocese, I should have waited on him; I think I owe him that attention for his high opinion of you. I look at every place through which I passed fifteen months ago with such feelings of delight, and I reflect on the different feelings that I experience on seeing them again. What a strange thing is affection, such as mine to you!

I have heard from my son; his letters were written on the eve of an engagement; he seemed to think nothing of it; but was rather desirous of exercising his rapier by way of curiosity. I should have been dreadfully alarmed at this letter, had I not been very well informed concerning the march of the imperialists, and the great respect they have for your brother's regiment.

Good heavens! my dear child, how ill I use you! what nonsense I have written! Perhaps when I write you from Paris, I may send some trifle or other that may amuse you; the things, however, of most importance will come from Provence. But your health; ah! that afflicts me most. I fear you do not sleep well, and that you will be ill again; you tell me nothing about it, which only adds to my uneasiness.

LETTER CCLXII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Thursday, Nov. 2, 1673.

At length, my dear child, I am arrived here in safety, after a journey of a month, which fatigued me less than the last night has done, though I had the best bed in

* The bishop of Sens.

the world. I never once closed my eyes; I counted every hour upon my watch, and the moment day broke, I got up: "for why remain in bed, if I cannot sleep *?" We entered Paris yesterday, which was All-Saints', the better day the better deed, and alighted at M. de Coulanges': I will not repeat to you all my folly and weakness on the occasion. I was not fit to be seen: however, I checked myself as much as possible, and said the wind had made my nose red. M. de Coulanges embraced me, then M. de Raré, madame de Coulanges, and mademoiselle de Méri. In a moment after followed madame de Sanzei, and madame de Bagnols, and the archbishop of Rheims, all full of love and admiration for the coadjutor; then came madame de la Fayette, M. de la Rochefoucault, madame Scarron, d'Hacqueville, La Garde, the abbé Grignan, and the abbé Têtu. I am persuaded you hear and see all that passed, even where you are, and the joy that was expressed on all sides, and "how is madame de Grignan? and what journey have you had?" and a long train of et cæteras, without connexion or end. At length supper was served, and the company having retired, I passed the night in the delightful manner I have described to you.

This morning at nine o'clock, La Garde, the abbé de Grignan, Brancas, and d'Hacqueville, came into my room to have a little private chat; in the first place, I must tell you, that you cannot esteem Brancas, La Garde, and d'Hacqueville, too much; as for the abbé de Grignan, that comes of course. I forgot to tell you, that the first thing I did last evening, was to read your four letters of the fifteenth, eighteenth, twenty-second, and twenty-fifth of October. I felt all you so well express; but can I thank you sufficiently for your good

* A line in one of Blot's Chansons Choisis.

and kind affection, and the care you take to inform me of your affairs? Ah! my dear child, it is but justice; for I have nothing at heart so much as your interest, whatever it may be: your letters are my life, waiting however for something better.

I am astonished that M. de Grignan's disorder has prospered in the way you tell me it has; in other words, he must be careful in Provence of every fold in his stocking: I wish he may do well, and that his fever may leave him, for the sword must be drawn. I hate the idea of this petty war.

I return to your three friends, whom you ought to love firmly, for they think of nothing but how they may serve you; they met with the right person in me for a conversation of this kind; accordingly we kept it up till noon. La Garde gives me strong assurances of M. de Pomponne's friendship; they are all very well satisfied with him. If you ask me what is the present subject of conversation at Paris, I shall tell you M. and madame de Grignan, their affairs, their interests, their return, &c. In short, I have heard of nothing else hitherto; those who understand matters will tell you what they think of your return; I do not desire you to believe me; believe La Garde. We have been considering for how many reasons you ought to come, in order to adjust matters, both with the head and the other principals, which your good friend * has used all his endeavours to confound; in short, he has knocked at every door, and artfully misrepresented things in his conversation, which is full of secret venom, concealed under the most insinuating address. I think it would be proper for you to declare openly your intentions of coming, and perhaps

* All this relates to a dispute which subsisted at that time between the bishop of Marseilles and the Grignan family.

you may meet him here, for he talks of coming himself; and then M. de Pomponne and the rest of your friends will be ready to assist you, and set your affairs upon a proper and permanent footing; but while you are at such a distance, you will always escape their remembrance: besides, the person that speaks here, has always the advantage of him who says nothing. When you set out for Orange, I mean M. de Grignan, I think it would be advisable to inform M. de Louvois of the state of things by letter, that he may not be surprised.

I have just seen M. de Pomponne, M. de Bezon, madame d'Huxelles, madame de Villars, the abbé de Portocarrero, and madame de Baré, who all send you a thousand compliments and good wishes: in short, believe La Garde: this is all I have to say to you. It is the opinion here, that you should not send ambassadors, but that you and M. de Grignan should come in person. The war can make no difference. M. de Pomponne told d'Hacqueville, that affairs would not be so soon settled in Provence as some people might imagine, and that war often breaks out when there is the most talk of peace.

I must tell you a droll incident. The other day madame de R****** and madame de Bu****** had a high dispute about twelve pistoles; La Bu*****, tired of the controversy, told her it was a trifle not worth disputing about, and so she would give it up. "Upon my word, madame," says the other lady, "this is very generous in you, who have lovers to supply you with cash."—"As for that, madame," replied La Bu****, "I am not obliged to explain myself to you; but I know this, that when I was first introduced to company, about ten years ago, you were obliged to pay money to yours."

Despreaux went with Gourville to wait on the prince,

who was desirous that he should see his army. "Well," said he to the poet, "what do you think of my army?" "I think, my lord," replied Despreaux, "it will be a very fine one when it comes of age." Now you must know, the oldest soldier amongst them is not above eighteen.

The princess of Modena* was just on my heels at Fontainebleau, she arrived this evening, she lodges at the Arsenal, the king is to pay her a visit to-morrow: she is to wait on the queen at Versailles, and then adieu.

Friday evening, November 3.

M. de Pompone has just paid me a kind visit. I expect to hear at what time to-morrow I may see him at his own house. He has not heard of a letter of suspension: in this country things are viewed in a different light from what they are in Provence; all the wise heads desire this suspension, lest you should be deceived, and in the prospect of a peace which they really wish: but they think you are in a place where you can see more clearly into the event of the syndic; and they would not take any step that might displease you. The immense distance between us, prevents any thing like just reasoning. Read all d'Hacqueville's letters with attention, for whatever he writes is of importance; indeed you cannot love him too well. Your brother is well; he is not certain yet where he shall pass the winter. I am perfectly acquainted with all that relates to your interest, and I speak better upon the subject here than at Grignan.

We could not help smiling at your care, in desiring me to send for La Garde and the abbé de Grignan: alas!

* Maria d'Este princess of Modena, who was going to be espoused to the duke of York, brother to Charles II., and after his death king of England, by the name of James II.

poor souls, they were already upon the watch, and thought of nothing but me.

I am wholly yours, my dear child, and am so well pleased with the time I dedicate to you, that I make every thing give way to the least circumstance that relates to you. I heartily embrace our poor count: do you think I may continue to love him still? have you any objection to it?

LETTER CCLXIII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Monday, Nov. 6, 1673.

I HAVE had a charming conversation for more than two hours with M. de Pomponne; never had any one a more favourable audience, or a more delightful reception. D'Hacqueville was present, who will tell you the same; we were both highly pleased with him. I do not know whether he thinks the present state of affairs likely to produce a peace; but he said the war should not prevent him from asking leave for M. de Grignan to come to Paris after the assembly, and that he thought your best way would be to take your own time for this journey. You are right in saying, that honours will not change my feelings with respect to you: alas! my poor love, you are every thing to me, and every thing revolves round you without approaching you, or diverging from me. How good it was of you to write to my friend Corbinelli, and to madame de la Fayette! The latter is charmed with you, and loves you better than ever she did: she longs earnestly to see you here: you know her, and may depend upon her sincerity. M. de la Rochefoucault is as amiable and worthy as ever; he has not stirred out of my room these two days. You

may depend upon his friendship, and on that of many others whom I will not name; for it would be an endless catalogue. I have had several visits from personages of fashion, and my cousins de Bussy among the rest, very smartly dressed in the beautiful silks they bought at Semur. The duchess of York is at the Arsenal; all the town flocks thither; the king has been to see her, and she has been to Versailles to visit the queen, who ordered her a *fauteuil* *. The queen is to return her visit to-morrow, and on Thursday she is to decamp.

I dined to-day at madame de la Fayette's, for the first time of my going out, for I have hitherto played the person of importance in my own apartment. Do you not purpose going to Salons †, when monsieur de Grignan is at Orange? I have received answers from all your gentlemen; pray remember me to them sometimes, and to your ladies too, whom I greatly honour and esteem. Does madame de Baumont still keep up her character of forgetfulness? You may say as you please, my dear child, but I am very uneasy about your health; you sleep ill I am persuaded, and you harbour a train of destructive thoughts. Return, after an absence of three years, and breathe again your native air. If your family have any regard for your health, they ought to consult what may tend to its preservation. I say nothing to M. de Grignan; he can hardly suspect me of not thinking of him.

* A chair of state.

† A small town in the diocese of Arles, at about five leagues from Aix; and where the archbishop of Arles, who in these letters is always styled the coadjutor, resided at that time.

LETTER CCLXIV.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, Nov. 13, 1673.

I LOVE you too well, my dear child, to be happy here without you. Alas! I have brought Provence and all your affairs along with me; *in van si fugge, quel che nel cor si porta* *. I am a proof of this, for I do nothing but languish after you perpetually. I cannot bring myself to a proper resignation to the will of Providence, in the disposition he has made with respect to us; never surely did any one stand so much in need of the aid of religion as I do; but, my child, let us talk about our affairs. I had written to M. de Pomponne as you desired me; and as I had not sent my letter, and thought it a pretty good one, I showed it to mademoiselle de Méri to gratify my vanity. I have dined with the abbé de Grignan and La Garde; after dinner, we went to d'Hacqueville's; we talked a great deal, and as they have the best judgement in the world, and as I never do any thing without them, I am never deficient. They think there never was a journey more necessary than M. de Grignan's. You will say, But how is leave of absence to be obtained, now war is declared? I shall answer, that it is more declared in the gazettes than here: in this country every thing is suspended. We expect something, but we know not what: the assembly of Cologne however is not yet broken up, and M. de Chaulnes, by what I hear to-day, will not hold our states, but M. de Lavardin, who arrived yesterday, and sets out on Monday with M. Boucherat: this gives rea-

* In vain we fly from what we bear in our heart.

son to hope that some negotiation is going forward. Not a word is said here of war; we shall however soon see: you must always hold yourself in readiness: do nothing which may break the neck of your journey, and confide in your friends, who would not wish you to ask leave of absence unseasonably; they do not approve of your sending an ambassador; yourself, or nobody. When you are here, things will wear a different aspect from what they do in Provence. Good heavens, my dear child, if there were only this reason, come for your health's sake, come that you may not be destroyed, come and *cook* other thoughts, come and resume your consequence, and put a stop to the injustice that has been done you. If it were I alone who held this language, I should advise you not to attend to it; but the persons who give you this counsel are not easily corrupted, and are not accustomed to flatter me.

The abbé de Grignan, La Garde, and I, have been to pay a visit to your first president *; he is returned from Orléans. He kissed the king's hand the day before yesterday; when his majesty told him, that he would have strange turbulent spirits to deal with in Provence. He is a man that will restore a good understanding on all sides; he is a man, in short, that———. I am vexed to think that you have yet received none of my letters but those which I wrote upon the road. Heavens, shall I never hear your voice again? Alas! my dear child, what a distance is there between my fire-side and yours! How happy was I when with you! I felt my joy in its full extent, and have nothing to upbraid myself with; I made the most of my time, and kept my pleasure till the last moment.

* M. Marin, then just nominated to the chair in the parliament of Aix.

The queen has desired *Quantova** to let her have one of her Spanish women to attend her that was not yet gone: this she readily granted; and it has so delighted the queen, that she declares she shall never forget the obligation. I am surprised that madame de Monaco has not yet sent me any compliments on your account. I have received a great many visits and civilities from Versailles. My son is in excellent health. M. de Turenne is still in my son's army. They are at Philipsbourg, the imperialists are very strong; you know, I suppose, that they have thrown a bridge across the Maine; I found poor Guitaut agitated to death at this intelligence: I told him that nothing would have prevailed on me to have quitted Provence, but the dislike I had to hearing second-hand news, and not being able to see things with my own eyes. The abbé Têtu is very fond of madame de Coulanges, but only till you return, he says; I sup almost every night with her. M. de Coulanges' cabinet is more beautiful than it ever was; your little pictures are in their full lustre, and very properly disposed. Every one here entertains the most respectful and friendly, I had almost said tender, remembrance of you; but this latter sentiment ought not to be so general. I embrace M. de Grignon, and wish him all possible happiness. Brancas and M. de Caumartin are here; the former embraces you: the latter does not embrace you; but he has just had an admirable conversation with the worthy M. Marin †, to give his son instructions with regard to the behaviour he is to observe towards M. de Grignan.

* Madame de Montespan.

† M. Marin was lively and witty. He was once in the library of a man well known to be of Jewish extraction. He remarked on the back of his books, coats of arms, to which, like many others who bear them, he was not entitled. "What do I see there?" said he. "My arms," rep'ied the other. "I thought," resumed the president, "they were Hebrew characters."

LETTER CCLXV.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Monday, November 13, 1673.

I RECEIVED my dear child's long, good, and delightful letter of the 5th instant, by the chevalier de Chaumont. I know the nature of this kind of dispatches; they relieve the heart; and are written with an impetuosity, that gives pleasure to the writer. Of all those to whom you write such packets, I certainly give them the best reception, and am the most interested in their contents. I enter into all your sentiments. I seem to see, to hear, and to be with you. I read your letter with our dear d'Hacqueville, whom you cannot love too well; he is very angry that you should suffer yourself to be so far carried away by resentment; he would have you speak smoothly and stab home, as your adversaries do; or if that appears a conduct too treacherous for you to adopt, he would have you curb your words and your resentment; would have you go on as usual, without fretting and making yourself ill: he wishes you not to make open war, and, above all, never to bring forward M. de Pomponne in things that are written to you privately, and of which the source might be easily traced. This would be to draw upon ourselves the hatred of those who confide in us, and prevent them from giving us information in future: I entreat you to be very cautious in this respect. If you imagine yourself to be otherwise than on a good footing in this part of the world, you are mistaken; we consider it, however, absolutely necessary that you should accompany M. de Grignan. As to the coadjutor's journey, we think it may serve to amuse him agreeably enough, but that it

is not at all necessary to your affairs, and would therefore be ridiculous if undertaken on that account. If you cannot get leave, it would be better not to let any of the family appear, but suffer every thing to remain quiet till your return. You must depend upon d'Hacqueville and La Garde, supported by M. de Pomponne, to know when it will be proper to ask leave. The first president of Provence does not pass here for a nephew of M. Colbert's. I cannot think where you picked up the relationship; he is the son of M. Marin, who bears the title of Chataigneraie, and was intendant at Orléans; this is all I know of him. I wrote you word that we had paid him a visit; he is the person with whom you must regulate your pretensions. Be assured, my dear child, that M. de Grignan will be able to stand his ground firmly, unless by some fault of his own.

You estimate at a higher value than we do, madame de Montespan's present to madame de la Fayette. It is a little writing-desk of St. Lucca wood, very prettily ornamented indeed, and a plain crucifix. As the fair lady is fond of being thought generous, she amuses herself in making this kind of presents to the ladies of her acquaintance; but I cannot see that it is of any great value or consequence to our friend. I have just learned that your first president is in no way related to M. Colbert, except that his sister, who is to marry the marquis d'Oppede, is the daughter of his father's third wife, who was sister to M. Colbert of Torron; this is their pedigree.

But, my dear child, when I reflect that I am two hundred leagues from the field of battle; when I wake in the middle of the night unable to close my eyes afterwards, I think of you, that having no amusement, and hearing of nothing else, you have no rest, like me, and will certainly be ill. Would to heaven you were here

with me! It would be of more service to you than being at Lambesc. M. de Chaulnes is returned, but is to go again after the states; the others remain at Cologne*. M. de Lavardin called to see me during the short stay he made here; that is another friend whom I shall bring into play at his return. I neglect nothing with madame de Coulanges, and the abbé de Têtu; that channel is already taken care of, and in our own hands; but it will be long before we shall be able to undertake any thing decisive.

M. Chapelain is dying; he has had a sort of apoplexy, which has taken away his speech; he confessed, by squeezing his confessor's hand in answer to the questions he put to him; he sits upright in his chair like a statue. Thus doth God humble the pride of the philosopher†.

* France had at that time plenipotentiaries at Cologne, to assist at the negotiation of peace.

† The extent of his acquaintance with the sciences, which were at that time little known, justly obtained him this name. He had besides refused the situation of tutor to the dauphin. But though he disdained honours, he loved money. This philosopher died worth twenty thousand crowns. Anecdotes of his avarice are recorded which would shine in comedy. He died the victim of his vice. Going to the academy in the midst of winter, he preferred walking through the water, to paying a trifling sum to pass over by means of a plank that had been placed across a stream; and when arrived at the academy he avoided the fire, and sat at the board, to hide his wet and dirty shoes. He thus caught a violent cold, which occasioned his death, and gave rise to the expression, Never poor poet died so rich.

LETTER CCLXVI.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, November 17, 1673.

We make the most here of the castle of Orange. M. de Garde, who knows it, is apprehensive that it will hold out longer than people imagine, so that if M. de Grignan is fortunate enough to finish the siege in a short time, it will turn out greatly to his credit; and if the troops he has with him, should not prove sufficient, no one will be surprised at the delay, nor throw any blame upon him. The expense is also talked of, which will by no means be trifling; and, in short, all your friends, and they are not a few, do their utmost without being at the cost of any thing but to speak the truth. The first president of the court of aids was by my fire-side when the abbé de Grignan came in from Versailles; I wish you could have seen how heartily he entered into our interests: I am certain he will not easily be the dupe of the *hail**.

I supped with Dangeau at madame de Coulanges', where we had a great deal of conversation about you; he swears if he had not met you at Aix, he would have taken the princess, his ward†, to Grignan; he had been mentioning you to her all the way from Modena; the poor princess is dreadfully afflicted with a dysentery. Affairs in England do not go on as could be wished; the parliament is not fond of this alliance, and wishes

* A feigned name intended for the bishop of Marseilles.

† M. Dangeau having concluded the marriage of the princess of Modena with the duke of York, had the charge of conducting her to England.

for a rupture between England and France *. There is much talk of a cessation of arms; if that should take place, you must not hesitate an instant about coming. Your first president will set out about Lent. The prince and the duke are returned, and Gourville also. A thousand compliments await you from madame de la Fayette's, and the good folks there, by whom you are much beloved and esteemed.

LETTER CCLXVII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Monday, November 20, 1673.

I AM just returned, my dear, from Versailles, where I have been, as it were, in a veil. I have seen nobody but M. de Pomponne, we dined alone with him; his wife and sister-in-law were at Pomponne. After dinner, we talked together a full hour, considering and reasoning upon what was to be done, in order to leave the assembly at liberty to deliberate in spite of opposition. You would have been charmed with M. de Pomponne, if you had seen how he entered into all this reasoning, and into the best plans for your advantage. I never saw so excellent a friend; for such he truly appeared to-day. After having placed this affair in a thousand different points of view, d'Hacqueville and he were of opinion, that we ought to wait till the siege of Orange was ended, in order to make that a favourable occasion of rendering this opposition odious; and to stay till the opposition was begun, because it would be time enough then for his majesty to order it to be deliberated upon.

* Charles II. made peace with Holland, the 19th February, 1674, but refused to comply with his parliament in declaring war against France.

The assembly is not yet over, and that is sufficient. They thought, that to speak of it at present, would be to advance a thing which has not yet taken place, and which perhaps never will take place. And as the affair of Orange is not yet ended, so its expenses will not appear to have so much weight, till its success is known; and there might be reason to fear an unfavourable, or at least an indecisive, answer: whereas there may be so dexterous a turn given to the affair in a few days, that you may have reason to expect a satisfactory termination. M. de Pomponne is very much concerned at the excess your divisions are carried to; he is persuaded that the intendant will hinder the opposition; and that the assembly will have freedom of deliberation. It is impossible to write in stronger terms than he has written on this subject, even to the bishop of Marseilles himself. He resolves to bring you all together after the assembly is over, and to effect a perfect reconciliation between you. Leave it to him when it is proper to demand your congé. He thinks M. de Grignan is long in setting out for Orange; it is the general subject of conversation here; and you are obliged to M. de Vivonne, and to M. de Gordes, for not treating it as a trifle; and for saying, that if you should not succeed with your pitiful regiment of Galerians, and your embroidered gentry, who serve only for the decoration of the siege, it would not be at all surprising; that you will perhaps want additional troops; that the example of Trèves shows plainly that one may be a long time besieging a paltry little town; that the governor of Orange is an adventurer who is not afraid of being hanged, who has two hundred men, twenty pieces of cannon, very little ground to defend, only one place of entry, and a great provision of powder and corn. This is what these gentlemen say, and what many echoes answer; so that M.

de Grignan cannot be blamed, and may, perhaps, perform a very pretty action.

All my friends tell me continually that I am handsome; they perfectly teaze me: I believe they are at a loss for conversation. Alas! my poor little eyes are quite sunk into my head; I have the vexation not to be able to sleep till five in the morning; and after all this they pretend to admire me. Our friend d'Hacqueville does not write to you this evening; but I send you the news he had written for you in the morning. He is pleased with our little journey, though we have done nothing. It is no easy matter to be determined, and to know what we have to do.

I told you that the prince, and the duke his son, were returned, very well pleased that your imagination is no longer obliged to travel over Flanders in search of them. Had they not already made an ample provision of laurels, those they have gathered this year would not be sufficient to defend or to adorn them. Bonn is taken: so far so good. M. de Turenne is desirous to return home, and to put *my son's army* into winter-quarters. All the officers say, Amen.

M. de la Rochefoucault does not stir from Versailles; the king sends for him, and makes him sit by madame de Montespan to hear the rehearsal of an opera, which will surpass all that we have yet heard; you must come and see it. We make no doubt of your obtaining leave, nor of the necessity of your coming hither. Do not neglect to consult the coadjutor upon every occasion, he is the source of good sense and wise expedients; and if he were not in the house with you, you ought to go in quest of him, to the farthest part of Provence. There are occasions when his presence would perhaps have great effect. I am persuaded that he would spare neither his abilities nor his health to

be serviceable to you. When I consider how the b[illegible] spends his money, I cannot comprehend that he h[illegible] thoughts of yielding. As for an agreement be[illegible] you, I wish it, and shall always wish it, if it wer[illegible] on account of the mischief this quarrel does to your person and your temper. I am not the only [illegible] who thinks thus. The archbishop of Rheims is a great acquisition to you; so many others send their compliments and good wishes to you, that I should never have done if I were to enumerate them. I beg you to remember me to the great and divine Roquesante: tell him he has promised not to forget me. M. de Grignan and M. le Coadjutor, you do well to love me; but I defy you both to love madame de Grignan better than I do.

LETTER CCLXVIII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, November 24, 1673.

I ASSURE you, my dear, that I am very uneasy respecting your siege of Orange: I can have no peace till M. de Grignan has extricated himself from that ridiculous affair. It was thought here at first, that no other ammunition besides roasted apples would be wanting to carry on the siege. Guilleragues* said it was only a duel, a single combat between M. de Grignan and the governor of Orange, and that M. de Grignan ought to

* Guilleragues was secretary to the cabinet council, and was afterwards ambassador at Constantinople. Boileau addressed his fifth epistle to him, beginning with this line:

Esprit né pour la cour, et maître en l'art de plaire.
Born for the court, and master of the art of pleasing.

be proceeded against as a duellist, and to lose his head. We have made the truth appear in opposition to these ridiculous witticisms: and madame de Richelieu, with her usual goodness, told the king at dinner, how the case stands. Several persons are rightly informed of it at present; and people begin now to go from one extreme to another, and to say, that M. de Grignan will not succeed in it; and that he ought not to undertake to force two hundred men, well furnished with cannon, since he has no other troops than those pitiful galley-slaves, who are not much esteemed for a siege. The duke and M. de la Rochefoucault are persuaded he will not succeed. You know the world is always in extremes. The event will determine every thing: I wish it may prove successful. I can have no joy or tranquillity, till I know the end of it.

I have made your compliments to Brancas; he is persuaded, you would not at present be proof against any one, who could offer you the suffrages of two consuls. Madame Colonne* was found upon the Rhine in a boat among some peasants; she was going I know not whither, into some remote part of Germany. Mademoiselle de Meri informs me, she has the head-ache so violently that she cannot write to you: she therefore begs me to make her remembrances to you. Those you send me in your letters are so extremely natural, that scarcely any thing else is talked of, but the excess of our affection. I have in my pocket, letters of M. de Coulanges, and of M. d'Hacqueville, which speak of nothing but me. It is true, I have enjoyed more of your friendship and affection in my journey, than I

* Niece of cardinal Mazarin, and wife of the high constable Colonne.

should have done in my whole life. I felt it pl[illegible], and the time was very pleasant to me; you cannot comprehend the uneasiness I suffered in seeing it pass so swiftly away. You are too grateful, my dear, for such slender obligations. When I consider that all my good will to you produces nothing substantial, [illegible] of what you say in return: it is true, my intention is good, and this gives me sometimes such happy turns of expression, when I am speaking of your interests, that if I had power or influence equal to my fluency of speech, they would have some effect.

We were stopped short the other day by M. Pomponne, who assured us that he had written to the intendant, to desire that if he could not prevent the opposition, he would at least leave to the assembly the liberty of giving their opinions: we did not then dare to let him understand that we desired something more. But as I am continually thinking on your affairs, I told M. d'Hacqueville, that I desired once for all to be able to form an opinion of the difficulty there would be of speaking to the king of this affair, in order to know what might be depended on, and to endeavour to get free from that servitude, which the bishop of Marseilles knows how to make use of in so generous a manner. Madame de la Fayette encouraged us in this design; and to-morrow we are to set out, he and I alone, without any further intention than to dine with M. de Pomponne, and consider what turn it will be proper to give to this business. We intend to go purely with this single view, without admitting a thought of any thing besides; we shall see neither king nor queen; I shall be in a plain dress, and we shall visit no one but M. de Pomponne. When we study to pay our court well, we seldom succeed: I will return a few days after to pay

my devoirs. To-morrow the great d'Hacqueville and I are to have only you in our thoughts; I shall return in the evening, and write to you.

I saw madame de Souliers yesterday, with whom I had a great deal of conversation; she told me Bodinar was entirely in the interest of the bishop of Marseilles; I replied I did not believe it; she assured me that she knew it to be a fact; I said we should see. She told me a hundred little things, which irritated me exceedingly; but as you have no need of being provoked more than you have already been, I shall not acquaint you with them.

I have never suffered more uneasiness than I now do, as well on account of the siege of Orange, as your affairs at the assembly; I am more taken up with them than if I were with you.

The marquis de Souliers came to-day to see me, with little La Garde, who is in my opinion very agreeable; you may tell madame la presidente what I say of him; they will all set out in a few days. I think M. de Souliers is going to enlist under the banner of St. Ursula, and he will probably increase the number of your enemies. Farewell, my dear, till to-morrow evening, at my return from Versailles.

LETTER CCLXIX.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Monday, November 27, 1673.

Your letter, my dear, appears to be written in the style of a conqueror; you had found your account when you wrote, you had gained all your causes. Your enemies seemed confounded; you saw your husband go forth at

the head of the *drapello elletto* *, and you breathe nothing but success from the Orange expedition. The sun of Provence dissipates, at least in its meridian, the most gloomy vapours; in short, your humour shone forth in every line of your letter. May heaven preserve you long in this happy disposition! You are not to be blamed for seeing things in this light which you are; nor are we for viewing them here in a different one. You think the advantage is on your side; we wish it as ardently as you can do, and in that case are equally against an accommodation; but supposing money, which is the ruling god in all these things, should deceive you in your reckoning, you will then, I fancy, agree with us in owning that we should embrace any expedient. You see we do not always think alike, on account of the distance that separates us; distance indeed! this it is too that prevents us from hearing what is said upon the subject. We must however believe, that each party speaks as he thinks: if you were here, you would say as we do; and if we were there, we should think as you do.

Many people are curious to know how you will get out of the affair of the syndicship. Believe me, the loss of that little battle will have a different effect here to what it will in Provence. We let slip no opportunity of saying all that should be said relative to M. de Grignan's expenses, the great zeal he shows for his majesty's service, and how much he is beloved in his province: we forget nothing: and for natural tones, choice and flow of words, I may say without vanity, that we will not yield to those who pay visits in the morning by torch-light. But as a truce is talked of,

* The sacred banner; alluding to an expression in Tasso's Jerusalem.

and as M. de la Garde thinks your presence necessary, be perfectly easy respecting the conduct of those who know how and when to ask leave of absence for you. I cannot comprehend the expenses of this siege: I admire the inventions of the demon to make you throw away money: I am more vexed than any other person; for besides the reasons that render your presence necessary, I have one in particular that makes me impatient for you to come this year. The abbé is desirous of settling accounts with me, relating to my guardianship; now this can be done only in the presence of all the parties. My son will be here, if you will come: judge then of the pleasure you will give me in doing it. Besides, it would be imprudent to delay an affair of such importance. The abbé is old and infirm, and may die suddenly, in which case I shall not know how to turn myself, and shall be exposed to all the chicanery of the Bretons. I shall say no more: judge of my interest, and of the great desire I have to be quit of so important a charge. You will have time enough to conclude your assembly; after which I must entreat this mark of your esteem, that I may die in peace. I leave your own kind heart to meditate upon this.

The queen dismissed all her women yesterday: no one knows why. It is imagined she wanted to get rid of one in particular, and that, to make no distinction, she parted with all. Madame de Coëtlogon * is with madame de Richelieu; La Mothe †, with the maréchale; La Mark ‡, with madame de Crussol; Ludre and Dampiere § return to Madame; de Rouvrai is with her mo-

* Afterwards the marchioness de Cavoie.

† Afterwards duchess de la Ferté.

‡ Afterwards countess de Lannion.

§ Afterwards countess de Moreuil.

ther, who has taken her home with her; Lannoi* is going to be married, and seems quite happy; and as for Théobon†, I fancy she will not remain on hand. This is all I know of the affair at present.

The abbé Têtu is very well pleased with what you say to him through me: we often sup together. You stand exceedingly well with the archbishop of Rheims: madame de Coulanges is not quite on such a good footing with the brother‡ of that prelate, so you may look upon that channel as stopped up. Brancas is quite in your interest; and you are beloved by madame de Villars. La Garde and I have at length seen your first president; he is a very well-made man, and of a pleasing countenance. Besons says, he would make an excellent bull-dog if he wished to bite. He received us with great civility; we presented your and M. de Grignan's compliments to him. Some people say he will be a turn-coat, and love you better than the bishop. *Le flux les amena, le reflux les emmene* §. Did I inform you that the chevalier de Buous || was here? he is just come from Brest, and in his way passed through Vitré, where he had an admirable conversation with Rahuet; he asked who M. de Grignan was, and who I was. Rahuet made answer, that M. de Grignan was a man of distinction, and the principal person in Provence, but that it was at an immense distance; and that madame (meaning me) would have done much better to have married her daughter a little nearer to Rennes. The

* Afterwards marchioness de Montrevel.

† Afterwards countess de Beuvron.

‡ M. de Louvois, minister for war affairs.

§ The tide of fortune brought them in, the ebb will carry them back.

|| Captain of a man of war, and first cousin to M. de Grignan.

chevalier was highly diverted with this account of the family. Adieu, my dearest child; I am wholly yours. This is a truth nearly akin to that of two and two make four.

LETTER CCLXVIII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, December 1, 1673.

This siege of Orange is as unpleasant to me as it can be to you; what a ridiculous and expensive undertaking! The only good that I see in it, is the proof it has given of the love and attachment the people of Provence bear M. de Grignan, by the number and rank of those that attend him on this expedition. This will cut his enemies to the soul; but still, let him do what he will, the affair will bring him neither profit nor fame. I heartily wish it was once well over.

I supped with *Quanto's* fair friend *; you may depend upon it you will be well defended, if you are attacked in that quarter. She spoke of you in terms of the greatest regard and affection. She declared she had never met with any one who so completely suited her taste as yourself, and that no one could exceed you in amiableness of mind and beauty of person. She expressed great regret at your absence, and in a way not to be suspected. Her brother is not at all in madame de Coulanges' good graces. Volonne has purchased Purnon's place of maître-d'hôtel to Madame: this is a very pretty establishment; and thus has Providence seen fit to settle madame de Volonne. It is certain that *Quanto* (madame de Montespan), finding the queen's bed-cham-

* Madame Scarron.

ber a den of hydras, thought it the surest way to cut them off at once. What does not happen to-day, may perhaps happen to-morrow.

It is affirmed, that M. de Vivonne has the post of colonel-general of the Swiss guards*; and M. de Monaco is named to succeed him as general of the galleys. I did not tell you how well I was received by the wife of the latter upon your account. The new opera is in the highest vogue; every creature you meet is singing part of it. The king declared the other day, that if he were at Paris, he would not miss a night: a declaration which will be worth a hundred thousand francs to Baptiste †.

M. de Turenne has obtained leave of absence, and his army is going into winter-quarters. I shall expect your brother now every day, and your ladyship a short time afterwards, if you have ever so little value for me. The abbé Têtu lets slip no opportunity of rendering you service. He is another of those I have undeceived. My sweet child, be careful of your health; above all things endeavour to sleep, by banishing at night every thought that may tend to keep you awake.

* This post, which was vacant by the death of the count de Soissons, was a short time afterwards given to the duke de Maine, from whom it descended to the prince de Dombes, his son.

† Lully.

LETTER CCLXIX.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, December 4, 1675.

I AM at length relieved by having the siege of Orange taken off my mind; it was an additional load to the burden that oppresses me. Nothing now remains but the syndical war; I wish it was over. I suppose you will not delay entering upon it, now the little battle of Orange is gained. You cannot think what eagerness there was to be informed of the success of this curious siege. It was talked of in the first rank of news. I embrace the conqueror of Orange, but shall make him no other compliment than that of assuring him that it is with real joy I find this little adventure has taken so happy a turn: I heartily wish he may meet with the same success in all he undertakes, and embrace him with my whole heart. The attachment of the nobility to him is truly delightful: few persons could boast so numerous a train at so short a warning. M. de la Garde is just set out to know what is said of the conquest of Orange: he is loaded with our instructions, and with good sense and affection for us. D'Hacqueville sends me word, that he would advise M. de Grignan to write to the king; I wish this letter was, by virtue of magic, already in the hands of M. de Pomponne, or M. de la Garde, for I am afraid lest it should not come at a favourable time. The business of the syndicship has taken possession of my brain, since the siege of Orange has left it.

We supped again yesterday with madame de Scarron and the abbé Têtu, at madame de Coulanges'. We had a great deal of chat, in which you had your share.

We took it into our heads to conduct madame de Scarron home, at midnight, to the very farthest end of the Fauxbourg St. Germain, a great way beyond madame de la Fayette's, almost as far as Vaugirard, and quite in the country, where she lives, in a large handsome house *, the entrance of which is forbidden to every one, with a large garden, and beautiful and spacious apartments: she has an equipage, servants, and a genteel table; dresses neatly but elegantly in the style of a woman who associates with people of rank; she is amiable, handsome, good, free from affectation, and, in a word, an excellent companion. We returned very merrily, in the midst of a number of flambeaux, and in full security from thieves.

Madame d'Heudicourt † is gone to pay her court. It is a long time since she was seen in this part of the world. Every one thinks, that if she were not with child she would soon resume her former familiarities; and it is therefore imagined that madame Scarron has no longer so great a resentment against her as formerly. Her return however was brought about by other people, and is merely tolerated. The little d'Heudicourt ‡ is as handsome as an angel; she has been of her own head at court for this week past, and always keeps close to the king; this little creature enlivens every one by her presence: she is the prettiest piece of coquetry that ever was seen—she is but five years old, yet she knows as much of the court as those who have been there all their lives.

Some one told the dauphin the other day, that there was a man in Paris, who had lately exhibited an extra-

* The house where the king's children by madame de Montespan were brought up, under the care of madame de Scarron their governess.

† Bonne de Pons marchioness d'Heudicourt.

‡ Afterwards the marchioness de Montjou.

ordinary piece of workmanship, which was a little cart drawn by fleas: the dauphin, turning to the prince of Conti, said, "Who do you think, cousin, made the harness?"—"Oh," replied the prince, "some spider of the neighbourhood." Was not this good? The queen's maids still continue dispersed; it is said they intend to make ladies of the palace, of the bed-chamber, and of the table, serve instead of maids of honour. The whole, however, will be reduced to four of the palace, which will be the princess d'Harcourt, madame de Soubise, madame de Bouillon, and madame de Rochefort; but nothing is certain yet. Adieu, my dear child. I would have confessed yesterday, but a very able and good man refused me absolution, on account of my enmity to the bishop: if your confessors do not treat you in the same way, they are ignorant people, and know nothing of their duty.

Madame de Coulanges embraces you. She wished to write to you to-day; she continues to render you all the service in her power, and suffers no opportunity to pass unimproved. She is heartily rejoiced at the taking of Orange. She goes now and then to court, but never without saying something handsome of you.

LETTER CCLXX.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, Dec. 6, 1673.

I MUST begin, my dear child, by telling you of the death of the count de Guiche: this is the chief subject of conversation at present. The poor youth died of sickness and fatigue in M. de Turenne's army; the news came on Tuesday morning. Father Bourdaloüe went to acquaint the marshal de Grammont with it; who

feared it the moment he saw him, knowing the declining state of his son. He made every one go out of his chamber, which was a little apartment near the convent of the Capuchins, and as soon as he found himself alone with Bourdaloüe, he threw himself upon his neck, saying, that he guessed but too well what he had to tell him; that it was his death-stroke, and that he received it as such from the hand of God; that he lost the true, the only object of his tenderness and paternal affection; that he had never experienced [illegible] joy or violent grief, but through his son, who was not a common character. He threw himself on a bed, unable to support his grief, but without weeping, for this is a situation that denies the relief of tears. Bourdaloüe wept, but had not yet spoken a word. At last he began to comfort him with religious discourse, in which he employed his well known zeal and eloquence. They were six hours together; after which Bourdaloüe, to induce him to make a complete sacrifice, led him to the church of these good Capuchins, where vigils were said for his son. He entered the church fainting and trembling, supported more by the crowd that pressed round him on every side, than by his feet; his face was so much disfigured with grief, that he could scarcely be known. The duke saw him in this lamentable condition, and related it to us at madame de la Fayette's, with tears. The poor marshal returned at last to his little apartment, where he remains like a man under sentence of death. The king has written to him. No one is admitted to see him. Madame de Monaco * is inconsolable, and refuses to see company. Madame de Louvigny † is likewise incapable of receiving comfort;

* Catherine Charlotte de Grammont, sister to the count de Guiche.

† Maria Charlotte de Castelnau, sister-in-law to the count.

but it is only because she is not at all grieved. Do not you wonder at her good fortune? She is in a moment become duchess of Grammont. The chancellor's lady* is transported with joy: the countess de Guiche† behaves admirably well; she weeps when they tell her all the kind things her husband said, and the excuses he made to her when he was dying. "He was a very amiable man," she says; "I should have loved him passionately, if he had loved me in the slightest degree; I suffered his contempt with grief, and his death affects me with pity; I always hoped he would change his sentiments with regard to me." This is certainly true; there is not the least fiction in it. Madame de Verneuil‡ feels real concern on this occasion. I believe it will be sufficient, if you only desire me to make your compliments to her; so you need only write to the countess de Guiche, to madame de Monaco, and madame de Louvigni. The good d'Hacqueville has been desired to go to Frasé, thirty leagues from hence, to tell the news to madame de Grammont, and to carry her a letter written by the poor youth a little before he died. He made a full confession of the faults of his past life, asked pardon publicly, and sent to tell Vardes a great many things which may benefit him. In a word, he ended the comedy well, and has left a rich and a happy widow§. The chancellor's lady is so fully

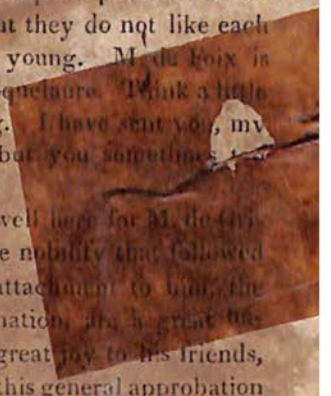
* Relict of the late chancellor Seguier, and grandmother to the countess de Guiche.

† Margaret Louisa Susan de Bethune Sulli.

‡ Charlotte de Seguier, mother to the countess de Guiche: she first married the duke de Sulli, and afterwards Henry de Bourbon, duke de Verneuil.

§ She was married afterwards to the duke de Lude, in 1688. The count de Guiche had been the lover of Henrietta of England. He also entered into the intrigues of M. de Vardes. He had made a bril-

sensible, she says, of the little happiness this poor lady must have had in her marriage, that she thinks of nothing but repairing this misfortune. We are at a loss for a proper match for her. You will perhaps name for her M. de Marsillac, as we did; but they do not like each other: the other dukes are too young. M. de Foix is destined for mademoiselle de Roquelaure. Think a little for us, for the affair is pressing. I have sent you, my dear child, a tedious account, but you sometimes tell me you like minuteness.



The Orange business sounds well here for M. de Grignan. The great number of the nobility that followed him solely on account of their attachment to him, the vast expense, and happy termination, are a great honour to M. de Grignan, and a great joy to his friends, who are not inconsiderable here: this general approbation is very gratifying. The king said at supper, "Orange is taken; Grignan had seven hundred gentlemen with him; they fired from within the walls, and the third day they surrendered. I am very well pleased with Grignan." This was repeated to me; La Garde can recite it with greater exactness.

As for your archbishop of Rheims, I do not know what to make of him. La Garde mentioned to him the expense. "This is always the story," said he; "people love to complain."—"But, sir," said La Garde, "M. de Grignan could not avoid being at a great expense, considering the number of gentlemen who assembled for his sake."—"You should say, for the service of the king."—"That is true, sir," said he, "but it was all voluntary; their design was to oblige M. de Grignan by serving the king."—But, my dear, this is

liant campaign in Poland, and to him was owed the passage of the Rhine. He was as handsome and witty as he was brave.

nothing; you know he is in other respects a good friend; but there are days when the spleen prevails, and those days are unlucky. Say nothing to me against your letters. We sometimes think our letters are bad, because we have a thousand confused ideas: but this confusion is in the head, while the letter is clear and natural: this is the character of yours, and they are sometimes so entertaining, that those to whom I do the honour of showing them are quite delighted.

I have news from our states of Britany. The marquis de Coëtquen has thought fit to attack M. d'Harroüis; he was pleased to say, that he alone was rich, while all Britany was oppressed with poverty; and that he knew persons much fitter to fill that post than he. M. Boucherat, M. de Lavardin, and the whole province, were ready to stone him; they were perfectly struck with horror at his ingratitude, for he owes a thousand obligations to M. d'Harroüis. In consequence of this, he has received a letter from M. de Rohan, ordering him to go to Paris, for that M. de Chaulnes was commissioned to forbid him to be present at the states: so he disappeared the evening before the governor arrived; and he remains in disgrace there for his wicked accusation against M. d'Harroüis. This, my dear, is what your title of governor's lady of Britany obliges me to inform you of.

I have just seen M. de Pomponne: he was alone. I was two hours with him and mademoiselle Lavocat, who is very pretty: we read some of your letters with pleasure. You are admired both for your style and the interest you take in certain affairs. M. de Pomponne easily understood what it was we desired of him. Were I to tell you the many handsome and obliging things that were said of you, and the delightful conversations I have had with this minister, not all the paper in my

desk would suffice. I am perfectly satisfied with him, and I desire you to be so upon my account of him; he will be much pleased to see you, and depends much upon your return. Adieu, my dear child; I expect your brother every day; and I wish for letters from you every hour.

LETTER CCLXXI.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Monday, Dec. 11, 167[illegible].

I AM just returned from St. Germain, where I have been two whole days with madame de Coulanges at M. de la Rochefoucault's. In the evening we went to pay our court to the queen, who said a thousand obliging things to me of you: but if I were to enumerate all the how-d'ye do's and compliments that I had, both from men and women, old and young, who crowd about me to inquire after you, I should have to name the whole court. "And how does madame de Grignan do? and when will she return?" and so on. In short, only figure me to yourself, in the midst of a crowd of idle people, who, having nothing else to do, would every one ask me some question, so that I was frequently obliged to answer twenty at once. I dined with madame de Louvois: it was who should be the first to invite me. I would have returned yesterday, but we were stopped by force to sup with M. de Marsillac in his enchanted apartments with madame de Thianges, madame Scarron, the duke, M. de la Rochefoucault, M. de Vivonne, and a band of heavenly music. This morning, with much ado, we got away.

A quarrel of a singular nature is the news of the day at St. Germain. The chevalier de Vendôme, and M. de

Vivonne, are the humble servants of madame de Ludre. The chevalier expressed a wish of compelling M. de Vivonne to resign his pretensions. But on what grounds? he was asked. Why, he would fight M. de Vivonne. They laughed at him. It was, however, no joke, he said; he would fight him: and he mounted his horse, to take the field. But the best of the story was Vivonne's reply to the person who brought him the challenge. He was confined to his room by a wound in his arm, and receiving the condolence of the whole court, ignorant of the threat of his rival. "I, gentlemen," said he, "I fight! He may fight if he pleases, but I defy him to make me fight. Let him get his shoulder broken, let the surgeon make twenty incisions in his arm, and then"—it was thought he was going to say, *we will fight*— "and then," said he, "perhaps we may be friends. But the man must be jesting to think of firing at me! A pretty project, truly! he might as well fire at the door of a house *. I repent, however, having saved his life in crossing the Rhine, and will do no more such generous actions, till I have the nativity cast of those I intend to assist. Would any one have thought, when I was remounting this fellow on his horse, that a few weeks afterwards he would want to shoot me through the head for my kindness?" This speech, from the tone and manner in which it was delivered, had so droll an effect, that nothing else is talked of at St. Germain.

I found your siege of Orange very much magnified at court: the king had spoken of it very agreeably, and it was thought highly honourable to M. de Grignan, that, without the king's order, and merely to follow him, seven hundred gentlemen should have assembled upon the occasion; for the king having said *seven*

* M. de Vivonne was remarkably corpulent.

hundred, every one else said *seven hundred*; it was added, with a laugh, that two hundred litters also followed him; but it is thought, seriously, that few governors could have obtained such a retinue.

I have had two hours' conversation at two different times with M. de Pomponne. He exceeds my most sanguine hopes. Mademoiselle Lavocat is [illegible] confidence: she is a very amiable girl. She knows all our affairs—the business of the syndic, of the procurator, our gratuity, opposition, deliberation, [illegible] does the map of the empire, and the interest of princes; that is, she has them at her finger's end: we call her the *little minister*. We have interludes in our conversations, which M. de Pomponne calls flashes of rhetoric to secure the good humour of the audience. There are some points in your letters I cannot reply to: we often answer ridiculously when we write from such a distance. You know how grieved we once were at the loss of some town, when they had been rejoicing for ten days at Paris because the prince of Orange had raised the siege: but this is one of the evils of distance. Adieu, my beloved child: I embrace you very affectionately.

LETTER CCLXXII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Tuesday, Dec. 15, 1673.

When I told you, my dear child, that you would not be the less esteemed here for not having interest enough to elect a syndic of your own, and endeavoured to make the gaining that point of as little consequence as possible, be assured it was the effect of mere policy, and of a premeditated design between us here, that in case you failed, you might not hang yourself for vexation; but

now that I find by your letter you have gained the victory, and have come off triumphant, I will candidly own to you, that it is the most fortunate circumstance in the world that you have carried your point in spite of the vigilance, precaution, entreaties, menaces, solicitations, bribes, and boastings, of your enemies: it is in truth delightful and shows, as well as the affair of Orange, how highly M. de Grignan is esteemed in his province. M. de Pomponne, d'Hacqueville, Brancas, the Grignans, and many of your friends were particularly anxious about the issue of this affair; and were far from considering it in so indifferent a light as I wished you to think they did. But this was only put on, as I told you before, to support your courage in case of a defeat. Mademoiselle Lavocat is full of this business; and, to tell you the truth, I have sent the two first sheets of your letter to M. de Pomponne, and d'Hacqueville, who was with him, for the purpose of giving them pleasure. Do not think, therefore, that we see things so very differently from you: every thing in which honour is concerned is seen alike in all countries. Be not angry with us; applaud our good intentions; and believe that we are fully of your opinion, and I in particular, who have no other.

You give me sufficiently to understand the obstacles that may obstruct your journey to Paris; but when I reflect that the coadjutor is ready to set out, he who had disposed of his abbey for two years, who was for turning off all his servants and his horses, to live a retired country life, and taste the sweets of a pure air; when I see him, I say, ready to obey the summons, and exert a kind of magic art against all objections; I cannot help expecting something of the same kind from you; and this year or never. This is how I reason: you will be

victorious in every respect, and will thoroughly efface the exclusion of your friend at last.

I dined yesterday with the duke, M. de la Rochefoucault, madame de Thianges, madame de la Fayette, madame de Coulanges, the abbé Têtu, M. de Marsillac, and Guilleragues, at Gourville's. You were celebrated there, and much wished for by all parties. After dinner we were entertained with Despreaux's Art of Poetry: it is a master-piece *. M. de la Rochefoucault has obtained no other favour than a good situation for his son: he called the other day at madame de Montespan's, when there was a concert; they insisted upon his staying; could they avoid it? Madame de la Fayette sees madame de Montespan for a quarter of an hour, when she goes once a month to St. Germain: this is no great favour, in my opinion. The chevalier de Vendôme has desired quarter of M. de Vivonne, who has never ceased lashing him for his misplaced courage, but always by declaring his own aversion to fighting: it has been granted, and they are reconciled, and no more is said of the affair. Soyecourt† asked Vivonne yesterday, when the king was to go a hunting. "When," replied Vivonne‡ smartly, "are the galleys to sail?" I am upon very good terms with the general; he does not think he shall have the Swiss generalship §: he said as I did, that they were *speaking arms*. Madame de la Valiere talks no more of retiring; it is enough to have said it once: besides, her woman fell at her feet to dissuade her from it; and then, you know, there was no resisting.

D'Hacqueville is just returned from stabbing madame

* This admirable work, begun in 1669, did not appear till 1674.

† He was grand-veneur or chief huntsman to the king.

‡ He was general of the galleys.

§ See the letter of December 1.

la maréchale de Grammont with the news of the death of the count de Guiche; and is himself so much affected at it, that he is quite unfit for company: I much doubt whether he will write to you to-day. La Garde constantly wishes you to come, even without M. de Grignan; and as to that, I refer you to the black art of the coadjutor, of which I before told you: you are clever, and will act a different character from that of a lady of eighteen. Corbinelli is here; he is as anxious about your affairs as he was at Grignan. We shall be transported with joy at the syndic, and when we have carried it with a high hand, they may talk of reconciliation as much as they please: we must be mild and gentle after victory. Despreaux will enchant you with his verses; he seems greatly affected at the situation of poor Chapelain. I tell him he is tender in prose, but very cruel in verse *. Adieu, my dearest child. How much should I be obliged to you, if you would come and embrace me! There is a great noise at our States in Britany. You are wiser than we are. Bussy has had orders to return to Burgundy; he has not been able to make peace with his principal enemies; he continues obstinately bent upon marrying his daughter to the count de Limoges †: it is like joining hunger and thirst together; but he is enchanted with the name. I expect my son every moment.

* See his ninth Satire, where he lashes Chapelain most unmercifully.

† Charles Francis de Rochechouart, son to the marquis de Chandenier, who had been first captain in the king's body-guard.

LETTER CCLXXIII.

TO THE SAME.

Monday, Dec. [illegible] 1676.

I EXPECT your letter with real impatience. I cannot be easy till the marquis de Buous * is confirmed syndic. I am in great hopes of it; but as I am strangely subject to fears, I should be heartily glad it were concluded. I saw M. de Pomponne for two hours at Paris: he hears very patiently my long conversations, and appears to like the medley of which they are composed: he does not scruple to say that he wishes M. de Buous to be syndic, that it appears to him to be just and reasonable, and that M. de Grignan would have great cause of complaint if, after what has passed at court, he had this mortification to endure in Provence. He likes your letters, he esteems and admires you; he sees plainly the power you have in Provence over the nobility, the parliament, and the different communities, and will take care to represent it in a proper place.

M. de Louvigni and many others are returned: it is said he complains that the *Torrent* has destroyed the good conduct of the *Dew* †, and given her a manner very different from the proper affection which so well became her. La Troche, who is arrived, desires me to say a thousand pretty things for her; write something kind for me to show her. Except by madame la maréchale de Grammont, the count de Guiche is already forgotten; it is a fact that the *Torrent* has resumed her usual

* N****** de Pontevez marquis de Buous, first cousin to M. de Grignan.

† Apparently this *Dew* means his wife; and in that case the *Torrent* must be madame de Monaco her sister.

course: this is a good country for forgetting people. I have very much commended to mademoiselle de Scudery the handsome proceeding of M. de Peruis. Guitaut has dined with me; La Troche and Coulanges were also here; your health was drank, but your policy in wishing to add more years to the three you have already spent in Provence, was thought somewhat extraordinary. It is a fine thing to suffer yourself to be effaced and forgotten in a place where you have business daily, and from whence you derive all your consequence. You may wish also to enjoy that which you obtain in your government, and one conduces to the other; but you ought to endeavour principally to be well here.

I have received your letter of the 10th: I think I have answered it beforehand, by assuring you that you will meet with nothing here to injure you; but why do you not finish quickly? why do you not make haste to remove this thorn from our feet and your own? we shall share with you in the joy of your triumph. The *Rain** joined with me in opinion, the other day, that nothing in life so sensibly affects us as what concerns our honour; and we concluded, like the bishop of Agen, that this could proceed from nothing but the most profound humility. I assure you, no one can enter more cordially into your interests, nor understand them better, than our worthy *Rain:* ah! how many laughable things I said to him, and how kindly he listened to me! He waits with impatience to hear the end of your syndicate. He will be very much amused at your letter. Since you repeat some of my sentences, I must repeat to you this of yours, which is worth an empire: "If his majesty would but have the goodness to let us tear one another's eyes out, he would find that he would be much better

* A fictitious name for M. de Pomponne.

served." You will neither be angry with me then, nor with the court, since you have your elbows at liberty with respect to the syndicate, but pray [illegible] affair, and let us have a letter to put us out of suspense.

You will be surprised, perhaps, to hear that you were spoken of for a *dame du palais*. I tell you so, however; and that is sufficient. You are held in great esteem in places that we esteem most. Such [illegible] excuse, then, when you threaten me with [illegible] again to this country. I understand [illegible] your weather; I see it from hence, and [illegible] with tender emotion: we are now starved [illegible] a short time we shall be drowned. [illegible] dear, that my journey into Provence has attached me to you more than ever. I had never seen you so long together, never enjoyed your mind and heart so fully; I neither see nor feel any thing but what I tell you, and pay severely for my past delights. D'Hacqueville is in the right to say he wishes to experience no such sensations. For my part, I should be very well satisfied, if God would but give me grace to love him more than I love you; but I assure you, this circumstance of robbing the Creator to pay the creature, is the source of uneasy reflections to me. The *Rain* and I talked very seriously upon this subject yesterday: good heavens, how delighted I am with this *Rain!* and I believe he is no less so with me; we find pleasure in renewing our former connexions.

All our German heroes are coming back, and I expect Sévigné continually. Embrace M. de Grignan for me; he would be charmed to hear me talk of him sometimes; he has a fine figure, and I detail his excellent qualities with pleasure. Adieu, my dear countess.

LETTER CCLXXIV.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, Dec. 22, 1673.

A PIECE of political news is just come into my head; and, contrary to my custom, I shall give it you. You know the king of Poland * is dead. The grand marshal †, the husband of mademoiselle d'Arquien, is at the head of an army against the Turks; he has lately gained so complete a victory over them, that fifteen thousand were left dead on the field of battle, two bashaws are taken prisoners, and he himself occupies their general's tent. After so distinguished a victory, it is not in the least doubted that he will be declared king, especially as he is at the head of such an army, and that fortune generally declares in favour of numerous battalions. This piece of news has given me pleasure.

I never now see the chevalier de Buous. He is enraged at not being made a *chef d'escadre* ‡. He is at St. Germain, and I am in hopes he will manage his affairs so well as to obtain his desire at last: I sincerely wish it. The archbishop (of Arles) has written to assure me of the joy the affair of Orange has given him, and that he hopes that of the syndicate will end no less happily. He finds himself obliged to own, by the event, that your vigour was of more service than his

* Michael Koribert Wiesnowieski, who died November 1673.

† John Sobieski, elected king of Poland, May 20, 1674. He married the grand-daughter of marshal d'Arquien, who, after his death, returned to France. The victory Sobieski gained in 1685 under the walls of Vienna, and which saved the emperor and the empire, is still more celebrated than that which is here spoken of.

‡ A rank somewhat inferior to that of our rear-admiral.

prudence, and that from your example h[illegible] perfect bravo. This has rejoiced me exc[illegible].

And now, my dear child, when I pictu[illegible] self pale and thin, when I think of the [illegible] endure, and that the slightest degree of [illegible] your life, I suffer night and day from a[illegible] you. What happiness would it be to [illegible] me, in a less destructive climate, in [illegible] which would again restore you to he[illegible] I am surprised that loving you as th[illegible] they do not urge this remedy to you. [illegible] as having been so useful till now, and [illegible] M. de Grignan so much in all his affair[illegible] regret I did not bring you with me: but when every thing is finished, why not give me this satisfaction? Adieu, my dearest child, I am very impatient to hear from you: you would throw yourself into the fire, you say, to convince me of your love: my child, I have no doubt of your affection, and without this extraordinary proof of it, you may give me a much more pleasing, and a much more convincing one.

LETTER CCLXXV.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Sunday, Dec. 24, 1673.

It is a long time, my dear, since I have felt joy equal to that I experienced at eleven o'clock last night. I was at madame de Coulanges' when word was brought me that Janet* was arrived. I immediately hastened home, and the moment I saw him, flew to embrace

* A gentleman of Provence, very much attached to the Grignan family.

him, and, half out of breath, exclaimed, "Well, have we a syndic? is it M. de Buous?"—"Yes, madame, it is M. de Buous."—I was transported. The next thing was, to read your letters; that done, I immediately sent to d'Hacqueville, to acquaint him that every thing had succeeded to our utmost wishes, and that M. Janet was arrived. D'Hacqueville returned me a long note, wishing me joy, and expressing his own. M. du Janet and I had a little conversation together, after which we supped, and then he retired; as for me, I did not close my eyes till past four o'clock: joy is no great composer of the senses. M. de Pomponne was with me yesterday. This is all I have to tell you at present; but between this and to-morrow that I send away my packet, I shall probably have much to add to it.

By eight o'clock this morning my chamber was full; La Garde, the abbé de Grignan, the chevalier de Buous, the *Worthy* *, M. de Coulanges, Corbinelli, &c. all talking, reasoning, and reading your accounts, which are indeed admirable. Never, surely, was there a more delightful termination: ah! what success! what success! could we have thought this at Grignan? The most we hoped for was a suspension: and yet, contrary to all belief, one little month has overturned the project of a whole year, and that a formidable project too, since it was backed with offers of money. I cannot but admire the consul de Colmar, who, in return for the great services you rendered him last year, failed you at the only time you wanted him: I hope, my dear, you will let this little instance of ingratitude be inserted in the book we wish to write in praise of that virtue.

We cannot but own the good bishop to be very skilful, he always keeps on the right side; finding your

* The abbé de Coulanges.

party too strong for him, and that you would doubtless name Buous, he names Buous likewise. All your friends here are of opinion that you should now alter your style, and be as modest after victory, as you were bold during the contest. It is La Garde that makes me act in the affair of your leave of absence; I assure you I have nothing to do with it farther than as I am prompted by him; I refer you to his letter, you will see his arguments: you know him well, and that, like another M. de Montausier,

Pour le Saint-Père, il ne diroit
Une chose qu'il ne croiroit *.

You are in high fortune, but still you must think a little of this part of the world, as well as of Provence. You will never meet with such another year, on account of the interest I have at present. I should be very sorry to be treated here as I was at Lambesc, when in the name of a friendship of eight years, which M. de Marseilles had talked so much of, and of the good terms upon which he had always been with the Grignans, I asked him to allow me to pay the courier, and he would not consent; and when I went to the intendant to conjure him to write instantly by your courier, you know how flatly he refused it: I have these two little things on my heart, and yet I do not wish the interest of the allies to prevent you from making peace. As soon as I left Lambesc, the courier was paid, the intendant loaded him with packets; my child, I am unfortunate: God will not permit me, in my extreme desire to serve you, the happiness of succeeding. In reality, the lucky mine of the coadjutor, which brought abbeys

*. For the holy father himself, he would not say a thing he did not believe.

and all kinds of good fortune, has been the most profitable to you. I know not how he disposed of his natural indolence during this affair; he seemed to have sent it a great way off, and his vigilance, application, foresight, expedients, courage, and judgement, were of the highest advantage to you. I had always great confidence in him; but, what wonders have you not effected? and how gloriously, too, has my dear count behaved? In short, you have all three played your parts to admiration. Ten or twelve persons sent to me daily for news of the syndicate; accordingly I have been obliged to dispatch no less than ten notes this morning, to madame de Verneuil, the bishop of Meaux, madame de la Troche, M. de Brancas, madame de Villars, madame de la Fayette, M. de la Rochefoucault, M. de Coulanges, and the abbé de Têtu; all of whom would have been offended, if I had not acquainted them with an event in which they seemed to take so much interest.

I must now go to confession, for the happy termination of this affair has restored my mind and softened my heart; I am as meek as a lamb; and the father will be so far from refusing me absolution, that he will give me two, if I ask it. I am persuaded you have not been neglectful of this duty on your side.

Monday, Christmas-day.

Ha! ha! mighty well indeed! what, are we got back to our lamentations for the count de Guiche? Why, my dear child, he is in a manner forgotten: nobody thinks about him, not even the marshal, who goes to court again as usual. As for your princess (de Monaco), after what she has already forgotten (Lauzun), there is no great danger, as you say, of her dying of grief.

Madame de Louvigni and her husband are delighted; the countess de Guiche would be glad not to marry again; but there are great temptations in a *tabouret*. The marshal's lady is the only one that grieves; and she grieves sincerely.

You will by this time have received two or three of my letters, full of uneasiness about the syndicate, at which you cannot but smile; but then in return I have this of yours about the count de Guiche; and so set one against the other, and we are quits: absence and distance naturally produce these anachronisms. But to business.

M. du Janet is gone this evening to St. Germain, that he may be there at the arrival of M. de Pomponne tomorrow; I have written a long letter to that minister, in which I beg him to remark how highly you stand with the nobility, parliament, and commons, of your province, and to do you all the good offices on that score which can alone be done by a person in his situation. I have spoken to some intelligent people about the silence of *the Sea**; they imagine it only proceeds from want of thought, and that he cannot but be pleased at the taking of Orange, since *the North*† seems to be so. I would not have you think that the brother‡ of *the Sea* is so fond of him as to adopt all his sentiments; every one speaks his own language, and follows his own humour, so you are not to care for any thing that has been said by the brother. The gentleman you mention to me is misinformed; *the Sea* is better than ever, and there has been no material change in this part of the world. Madame de Coulanges and two or three female friends have been to see *the Thaw*§

* M. de Louvois.
† M. Colbert.
‡ The archbishop of Rheims.
§ Madame Scarron.

in her great house, but they saw no one else*. I intend to go there myself some day, and then I will let you know all that is to be known. What you write me about your growing weary of being no longer agitated by hatred, is very whimsical; your employment is taken away, and now you are at a loss what to do. Sleep, sleep; you can do nothing better. M. du Janet tells me you hardly ever close your eyes. Think above all things, my dear child, of the re-establishment of your health.

LETTER CCLXXVI.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Thursday, Dec. 29, 1673.

I BEGIN my letter to-day, but I shall not finish it till to-morrow. My first subject shall be your journey to Paris. You will find by Janet, that La Garde is the person who thinks it most necessary for you to come, and has even said, that it was advisable to solicit for permission: perhaps he may have already obtained it, for Janet has seen M. de Pomponne. But you say there is no necessity for coming; and then you proceed to give me such strong reasons against it, and make every thing appear so inconsiderable, that others laid the greatest stress upon to inforce this journey, that I am quite overwhelmed: I know with what force you argue, my dear child, and I have not the power to contradict you, especially when you ask me, "if it is possible that I, who ought to consider more than any other person the plan of life you have laid down, would em-

* That is, the king's children did not appear, to whom madame Scarron had lately been appointed governess.

bark you in an expense which may give a great shock to the weight which even now you are scarcely able to support," and so on. No, my love, I would not do you so much injury; God forbid! and while you show an example of reason, wisdom, and philosophy itself, far be it from me to give occasion to the world to accuse me of being a foolish, fond, and inconsiderate parent, who, for the sake of a little gratification to herself, and through excess of womanish tenderness, would prevent you from following the rectitude of your heart, and overturn and ruin the most prudent and rational schemes. But I thought you would be able to take this journey, as you promised me; and when I consider the expenses you must necessarily be at while at Aix, in balls, plays, entertainments, and feasts, during the carnival, I cannot but think that it would cost you less to come here, especially as you will have no occasion to bring any thing with you. M. de Pomponne and M. de la Garde have pointed out a thousand little affairs, in which your presence and M. de Grignan's will be absolutely necessary, not to mention that of the guardianship. I am ready to receive you. My heart fondly indulges in the pleasing hope you are not with child, and you stand in need of change of air. I even flattered myself that M. de Grignan would have left you with me this summer, and have saved you the fatigue of two months' travelling in one year, as if you had the robustness of a man. All your friends agreed that I had every reason to expect you with impatience: these were my motives; but these, all these, my dear, appear to you false and ill-judged; I yield then to necessity and the force of reasoning, and will endeavour, to the best of my power, to follow your example and submit. I will look upon it as a punishment inflicted upon me by Heaven for my sins; a greater could not well be found,

nor one that would so effectually reach my heart. But I must make the sacrifice that is required at my hands, and resolve to pass the remainder of my life separated from the only person in the world who is truly dear to me, the only one who completely suits my taste, my inclination, my heart, and who loves me better than ever. But all this must be given up to God, and I will do it, with his grace assisting me, and with a becoming adoration of his Providence, which has seen fit to join to the pleasing reflections of the happy and flourishing situation you hold, the poignant stings of absence and separation. These are my sentiments: they are not exaggerated, they are simple and sincere; I will make the sacrifice for my salvation. The conflict is over, and I will not say a word more upon the subject, but meditate incessantly on the invincible force of your arguments, and on your wisdom, which, while I praise, I will endeavour to imitate.

Janet went to M. de Pomponne at Port-Royal; let him tell you the manner in which he was received, and the pleasure that minister expressed at hearing that M. Buous was chosen. I leave Janet the pleasure of informing you of it, by a letter he has written to his wife. I have received a note from madame d'Herbigny*, who enters into the affairs of Provence more than any one: she is very amiable, and very obliging; she wished to know the affair of the syndicate and the guards, and this is an answer on the subject of the latter. She thought I had pleased her brother as much as herself, and when I told her how little he liked me, and how firmly he refused me last year a thing which he did himself this year without scruple, she could not help uttering exclamations of surprise: she cannot compre-

* Sister of M. de Rouillé de Melai, intendant of Provence.

hend that her sister-in-law can have declared in favour of your enemies, after all your civility to her: she remembers, as the highest compliment, what you said of M. de Rouillé, that justice is his ruling passion; in reality, it is the handsomest thing that can be said of a man of his profession.

There is no sort of finesse in the manner in which M. de la Rochefoucault, his son, *Quantova**, her friend †, and her friend's friend ‡, are at court; there is no tie between them; the son § is handsomely lodged; it was all done under the pretence of a supper: he is, as you know, on very good terms with *the North* ‖, but not more so than usual; his father does not go to that part of the world once in a month, neither does madame de Coulanges. There is not the least view or design in anything: this is a fact. I scarcely ever see Langlade. I know not what he is doing, nor has he seen Corbinelli: I wonder if this is owing to his political fears.

I made all your *animosities*, as you drolly call them, to Corbinelli, and they were very well received by him. I fancy he is come here to awaken a little the affections of his old friends. My son is just arrived, so I shall close this letter, and we will write to you both together to-morrow, and fill it full of news that I shall hear at St. Germain. It is said that the marshal de Grammont will not see Louvigni or his wife; they came here from their country-seat, about ten leagues off. We think no more of the count de Guiche now, than if there had never been such a person in the world; you certainly laugh at us with your tedious grief; we should never

* Madame de Montespan.
† Madame de Scarron.
‡ Madame de Coulanges.
§ The prince de Marsillac.
‖ Monsieur Colbert.

have done mourning, if we were to dwell so long upon every fresh occurrence of this kind that happens here. We are expeditious in these matters; be you so too.

LETTER CCLXXVII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, Dec. 29, 1673.

M. DE LUXEMBOURG is a little pressed near Maestricht, by the army of M. de Monterei* and the prince of Orange; he dares not venture to remove his camp, and he must perish where he is, unless they send him speedy and effectual succour. The prince is to set out four days hence with the duke and M. de Turenne; the latter is to serve under the two princes, and there is a perfectly good understanding between the three. They have twenty thousand foot and ten thousand horse; the volunteers and those companies which are not to march, do not go, but all the rest do. La Trousse and my son, who arrived here yesterday, are to be of the number: they have scarcely had time to pull off their boots before they are in the mud again: the rendezvous is appointed at Charleroi on the 16th of January. D'Hacqueville has written you word of this, but you will read it more distinctly in my letter†. It is certainly very important news, and has occasioned a great bustle every where. We know not what to do for money. It is certain that M. de Turenne is not on terms with M. de Louvois, but it is not generally known; and while he continues to keep in with M. Colbert, there will be nothing said about it. This afternoon I

* Governor of the Spanish Low-countries.

† M. d'Hacqueville wrote a hand very difficult to be read.

had some great folks with me, who desired their compliments to M. de Grignan, and to *Grignan's wife.* They were the grand-master, and the *charmer**; I had besides, Brancas, the archbishop of Rheims, Charôt, La Trousse, &c. who all in like manner desired to be remembered to you. They talk of nothing but war. The *charmer* knows all our affairs, and enters admirably into our little perplexities. He is governor of a province, which is sufficient to give him an idea of our feelings on those subjects. Adieu, my dearest child. I participate in all the joys of your conquests.

FROM MONSIEUR DE SÉVIGNÉ.

I ARRIVED yesterday noon, and the first news I heard was that we were to set out again immediately for Charleroi; what say you to this pretty arrangement? We storm, we swear, but are obliged to go notwithstanding. Our spruce courtiers are just at their wit's end about it. They had formed the finest plans in the world for passing their time agreeably in Paris, after an absence of twenty months; and now their projects are all overturned. I had much rather have gone to assist M. de Grignan in his siege of Orange than go to the north; why did he finish his duel so soon? I am vexed that he had so prompt a victory.

I do not know whether you complain of me still, but I am sure the fault is yours; you owe me several letters; but I forgive you, in consideration of the multiplicity of affairs you have had on your hands, and on such occasions only I allow you to forget a guidon. Ridiculous title! after a man has had it for five years. Adieu, my pretty little sister. You imagine, I suppose,

* The count de Lude and the duke de Villeroi.

that I think of nothing but rest and amusement; pardon me, my dear: are my horses ready? are my boots ready? I want a better hat, *piglia lo su, signor monsu.* This is all I have said since I arrived at Paris. Has it the appearance of a return, after an eight months' campaign?

LETTER CCLXXVIII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Monday, New Year's Day, 1674.

I WISH you a happy year, my child; and in this wish I comprehend so many things, that I should never have done, if I were to enumerate them. I have not yet asked leave for you to return to Paris, as you feared; but I wish you had heard what La Garde said of the necessity of your coming hither, that you may not lose your five thousand francs, and of what he thinks proper for M. de Grignan to say to the king. If it were a suit which you were obliged to solicit against any one who designed to injure you, you would doubtless come to solicit it; but as it is to come to a place where you have a thousand other affairs, you are both guilty of the greatest indolence. Ah! what an enchanting thing is indolence! you feel its power too much; read La Garde upon this subject, chapter the first. Consider in the mean time, that you would have the pleasure of seeing the king, and receiving his approbation.

The edicts are revoked which gave us so much uneasiness in our province. The day that M. de Chaulnes declared it to the States there was a cry of Long live the king, which made every one present weep for joy: they embraced each other, broke out into the highest expressions of rapture, ordered Te Deum to be sung, made

bonfires; and the thanks of the public were given to M. de Chaulnes. But do you know what we are to give the king as a mark of our gratitude? six hundred thousand livres, and as much more by way of a voluntary gratuity. What think you of this little sum? You may judge by this of the favour that has been done us, in taking off the burden of these edicts.

My poor son is arrived here, as you know; he is to return on Thursday, with many others. M. de Monterei is a very clever fellow; he disturbs the whole world; he fatigues the army, and puts it out of a condition to take the field, and begin the campaign, till the end of the spring. The troops were all at ease in winter-quarters; and when, after a tedious march, they are arrived at Charleroi, he has only a single step to take to make good his retreat: till when, M. de Luxembourg cannot be extricated. By appearances, the king will not set out so soon as he did last year. If, when in the field, we had to make an attack on some great town, or the enemy would come out and oppose our two heroes, as we should probably beat him, peace might almost be depended upon. This is what is said by persons of the profession. It is certain that M. de Turenne is out of favour with M. de Louvois; but as he is in favour with the king and M. Colbert, it has not made much noise.

Five ladies of the palace are appointed: madame de Soubise, madame de Chevreuse, the princess d'Harcourt, madame d'Albret, and madame de Rochefort; the maids of honour are to serve no more, and madame de Richelieu as a lady of honour is also discharged. There are to be only the gentlemen in waiting, and the maitres d'hôtel, as formerly. But that the queen may not be without women, madame de Richelieu and four other ladies are to wait constantly behind her chair. Bran-

cas is in raptures that his daughter * is so well provided for.

The grand marshal of Poland has sent a letter to the king, in which he tells his majesty, that if he has any person in view to raise to the crown of Poland, he will assist him with all the forces under his command; and if not, requests his protection and assistance for himself: the king has promised it to him; however, it is imagined he will not get himself elected, because he is not of the established religion of the nation.

The devotion of La Marans is the most sincere and unaffected you ever beheld; she is perfection itself, she is all divine; I have not yet seen her, for which I hate myself: a certain female acquaintance of hers told her that M. de Longueville had a real affection for her, and that he had prophesied she would become a saint. This made such an impression on her, that she immediately set about a reform in her life, resolving, if possible, to fulfil the prediction.

There is nothing to be seen of the little princes †. The eldest has been three days with papa and mamma; he is very pretty, but no one has seen him. I embrace you, my dearest child. I will see if any thing can be done for your friend, who has so generously killed a fellow-creature.

* The princess d'Harcourt.

† The king's children by madame Montespan.

LETTER CCLXXIX.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, Jan. 5, 1674.

It is a year ago this very day, since we supped with the archbishop: at this moment perhaps you are supping with the intendant: I am afraid, my dear child, your mirth is feigned. All you say on this subject to me, and to Corbinelli, is admirable. My heart thanks you for the good opinion you have of me, in believing I hold in abhorrence all villanous proceedings. You are not deceived.

M. de Grignan tells you true; madame de Thiange has left off paint, and covers her neck; you would hardly know her in this disguise. She is frequently with madame de Longueville, and is the very pink of the modish devotion. But she is still good company, and has not at all the air of a recluse. I dined with her the other day; a servant brought her a glass of liquor; she turned to me, and said, "The fellow does not know that I am become a devotee;" this made us all laugh. She spoke very naturally of her intentions, and of her change. She is very cautious of saying any thing that may injure the reputation of her neighbour, and stops short when any thing of that nature escapes her; for my part, I think her more agreeable than ever. Wagers are laid that the princess d'Harcourt will not turn nun these twelve months, now she is but one lady of the palace, and paints again: this rouge is the law and the prophets; it is the great point that our new devotion turns upon. As for the duchess d'Au-

mont, her taste is burying the dead *. They say the duchess de Charost kills people for her, with ill-compounded medicines, and then buries them in a religious retreat. The marchioness d'Huxelles is very good; but La Marans is more than good. Madame de Schomberg tells me very seriously, that she is of the first order for seclusion and penitence, not admitting any society, and refusing even the amusements of devotion; in a word, she is a penitent in the true sense of the word, and in all the simplicity of the primitive church.

The ladies of the palace are kept in great subjection. The king has explained himself upon this subject, and will have the queen always attended by them. Madame de Richelieu, though she does not serve any longer at table, is always present when the queen dines, with four ladies, who wait by turns. The comtess d'Ayen † is the sixth: she does not like the confinement of this attendance, and of being constantly at vespers, sermons, and other religious ceremonies; but there is no perfect happiness in this world. The marchioness de Castelnau is fair, blooming, and perfectly recovered from her grief. *L'Eclair*, they say, has only changed her apartment at court, not very much to her satisfaction. Madame de Louvigni does not seem sufficiently delighted at her good fortune. She is thought unpardonable for not adoring her husband in the same manner as when she was first married; this is the first time the public was ever offended at a thing of this nature.

* If we may believe Bussy, she rendered service of a different kind to the living. The duchess of Charost was the daughter of the superintendant Fouquet. She apparently had her recipes from her grandmother, of which we have a printed collection in two volumes, under the title of *Family Receipts by Madame Fouquet.*

† Mary Frances de Bournonville, afterwards marchioness de Noailles.

Madame de Brissac is beautiful, and follows the princess of Conti like her shadow. La Coëtquen is still the same as ever. She has a petticoat of black velvet, embroidered with gold and silver, and a brocade cloak. This dress cost her an immense sum; and when she thought she made the most splendid figure imaginable, every one said she was drest like an actress; and she has been so much rallied in consequence, that she has thrown it aside. La Manierosa * is a little vexed at not being a lady of the palace. Madame de Duras, who would not accept this honour, laughs at her. La Troche is, as usual, very much interested in your affairs: but I cannot express how strongly madame de la Fayette and M. de la Rochefoucault have your interest at heart.

Madame de la Fayette and I went to see M. de Turenne a few days ago; he has a slight fit of the gout. He received us with great civility, and talked much of you. The chevalier de Grignan has given him an account of your victories; he would have offered you his sword, if there had been any occasion for it. He intends to set out in three days. My son went yesterday very much out of humour: I was not less so, at this ill-judged and in every respect disagreeable journey.

The dauphin saw madame Schomberg the other day; they told him his grandfather had been in love with her: he asked in a whisper, "How many children has she had by him?" They informed him of the manners of that time.

* A feigned name.

† Madame de Schomberg who is here spoken of, mother of the [illegible] shal then living, captivated Louis XIII., when she was only a maid of honour, by the name of mademoiselle d'Hautefort. The king's gallantry exacted so little, that she even jested upon the subject, and said he talked to her of nothing but dogs, horses, and hunting. She was handsome and discreet. She attached herself to queen Anne of Austria,

The duke du Maine * has been seen at court, but he has not yet visited the queen: he was in a coach, and saw only his father and mother.

The chevalier de Chatillon has no longer any thing to seek for; his fortune is made. Monsieur chose rather to give him the office of captain of his guards, than mademoiselle de Grancey that of lady of the wardrobe. This young man therefore has the post of Vaillac, and is well provided for: they say Vaillac is to have d'Albon's, and that d'Albon is discarded. I told you how our states ended, and that they repurchased the edicts at two million six hundred thousand livres, and gave the same sum as a gratuitous gift, making together five million two hundred thousand livres; that the air was rent with cries of Long live the king, that we had bonfires, and sung *Te Deum*, because his majesty was kind enough to accept it. Poor Sanzei is ill with the measles: it is a disorder that soon passes, but is alarming from its violence.

I see no reason to ask the king's pardon for the humane gentleman who was guilty of assassination: the crime is of too black a nature. The criminals who were pardoned at Rouen, were not of this stamp; it is the only crime the king refuses to pardon. So Beavron has mentioned it to the abbé de Grignan.

I have heard the ladies at the palace spoken of in a way that made me laugh. I said with Montagne, "Let us avenge ourselves, by slandering them." It is however true, that they are under extreme subjection.

The report still prevails, that the prince sets out on Monday. The same day M. de Saint Luc is to espouse

and shared her disgrace during the life of Louis XIII. She afterwards quarrelled with her during the regency, for having spoken too freely against cardinal Mazarin.

* The king's eldest son by madame de Montespan.

mademoiselle de Pompadour: about this I am quite indifferent.

Adieu, my dear; this letter is growing too long; I conclude it for no other reason, but because every thing must have an end. I embrace Grignan, and beg him to forgive me for opening madame de Guise's letter; I was very desirous to see her style; my curiosity is satisfied for ever.

Guilleragues said yesterday, that Pelisson abused the permission men have to be ugly *.

LETTER CCLXXX.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Monday, Jan. 8, 1674.

Never did I read such delightful letters as yours, my beloved countess; I have just been reading one, which has charmed me: I have heard you say, that I have a way of giving an agreeable turn to the most trifling subjects. I am sure, my dear, I may with justice say it of you. There are five or six passages in your last letter, that have a brilliancy and sweetness that are irresistible. I do not know where I must begin to answer you.

I have a great inclination to talk to you about your fine sunshine, and your delightful walks. You may well say I am married a second time to Provence; I shall certainly make it one of my countries, provided you do not strike this out of the number of your [illegible] say a thousand kind things to me on the co[illegible] the new year; you are every thing to me, and my only study is, that people may not see in what de[illegible] are dear to me. I have passed over the beginning of this

* An expression that is become common, but which was new at that time, or it would not have been worth noticing.

year, without saying a syllable to you on the occasion; but be assured, my dear child, that this and every year of my life will be a continued chain of love, of which every link is devoted to you. You moralise admirably: it is certain, as you say, that Time flies every where, and flies swiftly. You exclaim against him, because he robs you of some portion of your youth and beauty; but he leaves you still a large share: for my part, I cannot behold his flight without horror, when I consider that he is every day bringing me nearer to old age, and, in the end, to death. Of this nature are the reflections of a person at my time of life; join with me, my dear child, in praying that I may draw the proper conclusions from them that Christianity teaches.

This grand journey of the prince and M. de Turenne, to relieve M. de Luxembourg, is come to nothing. M. de Monterei, finding his army somewhat incommoded in its situation, has made what they call a little retreat; so that M. de Luxembourg is once more at liberty. My son is the only one who set out: I never witnessed prudence, foresight, and impatience like his; he will have the trouble of returning, but that is nothing. All the other warriors are here. M. de Turenne has brought back a great many, and M. de Luxembourg will bring the rest. The ladies of the palace are to serve for a week: this subjection, of four waiting during dinner, is an unpleasant circumstance for ladies in the family way; they will be obliged to take midwives with them in their excursions with her majesty. Madame la Maréchale d'Humières * is very much disconcerted at being obliged to stand when others are sitting: if she pouts, she will pay her court badly, for the king will have submission. I believe it is made a jest of at *Quan-*

* Louise-Antoinette-Theresa de la Chatre, maréchale d'Humières, was not a duchess till the year 1690.

tova's; it is certain there is a place, where no wife is separated from her husband or her duties. We like no noise, unless we make it ourselves. The new princes have not yet made their appearance; some of them have been at Saint Germain, but they have not yet been seen. There are plays and balls at court every week. The king is to dance, and Monsieur is to lead out mademoiselle de Blois*, to avoid leading out Mademoiselle †, whom he leaves for the dauphin. Thursday next they play the new opera ‡; it is a most enchanting piece, there are some places where the music forced tears from me in spite of myself; I am not the only one who has been thus affected: madame de la Fayette feels the strongest emotions at it.

I frequently see Corbinelli, who adores you, and enters fully into my sentiments for you, which does not a little add to my love for him. I have a great esteem for Barbentane §; I think him one of the bravest men in the world, nay even romantically so, as I have heard Bussy say a thousand times, who was his intimate friend; they were brothers in arms. I hope soon to have news of your peace being concluded, *justitia et pax osculatæ sunt* ‖; do you understand Latin? you are very humorous! Adieu my child: you are no where for-

* Maria Anne de Bourbon, married afterwards, in 1683, to Louis de Bourbon, prince of Conti.

† Daughter to Monsieur, afterwards, in 1679, queen of Spain.

‡ Cadmus, written by Quinault, and set to music by [illegible] Lully.

§ A man of quality in Provence attached to the prince [illegible] in his Memoirs, relates an extravagant action of this Barbentane, who was in 1647 at the siege of Lérida; he went into an old church and took up a corpse that had been newly buried, brought it into the midst of his jovial companions, one of whom took the dead man by the cold hand, and thus began to make him dance. A duel, in which one of the party was killed, interrupted these orgies, which were resumed again after they had bewailed the unfortunate sufferer.

‖ Righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

gotten. Your brother is convinced of your regard for him; and loves you with equal affection he says, and I believe him.

Monday, after having sent my packet to the post.

D'Hacqueville is just arrived with a piece of news, which we wish you to know by this post. The keeper of the seals * is made chancellor: nobody doubts that it is to give the seals to some other person. The news will be public in three or four days: it is of some importance, and will carry a great weight with its party.

The prince sets out in two days, and M. de Turenne likewise, though ill of the gout, in order to be in time at the rendezvous at Charleroi. It is not true that M. de Monterei has retired, nor that M. de Luxembourg is at liberty; we therefore revoke that report, and give you this in its stead.

LETTER CCLXXXI.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, Jan. 12, 1674.

WELL, your peace is then concluded at last. The archbishop of Rheims and Brancas received their letters before I did mine; M. de Pomponne sent to inform me of this important event from St. Germain; I was ignorant however of the particulars, but now I know all. I advise you, my child, to regulate your conduct by circumstances; and since it is the king's will that you should be friendly with the bishop †, endeavour to obey him. But to return to St. Germain: I was there three days ago; I went first to M. de Pomponne's, who had

* Stephen d'Aligre, son to Stephen d'Aligre, also chancellor of France.

† Of Marseilles.

not yet applied for your leave of absence, but is to send for it to-day. From thence we went to the queen's; I was with madame de Chaulnes; there was nobody to talk but me, and you may be sure I was not deficient. The queen said without hesitation that you had been absent for more than three years, and that it was time for you to return. From court we went to madame de Colbert's, who is extremely civil, and well bred. Mademoiselle de Blois * danced; she is very pleasing and graceful. Desairs says she is the only one whe reminds him of you: he asked me what I thought of her dancing, for my applause was required, and I gave it with the greatest readiness. The duchess de la Valiere was there; she calls her little daughter *mademoiselle*, and the young princess in return calls her *pretty mamma*. M. de Vermandois was there too. No other children have yet made their appearance. We afterwards went to pay our respects to Monsieur and Madame: the former has not forgotten you, and I never fail to present your dutiful acknowledgements to him. I met Vivonne there, who accosted me with, "*Little mamma*, I beg you will embrace the governor of Champagne †."—"And pray who is he?" said I.—"Myself," replied he.—"You!" said I; "pray who told you so?"—"The king has just informed me of it." I instantly congratulated him. The countess de Soissons was in hopes of getting this post for her son.

There is no talk of taking the seals from the chancellor ‡; the good man was so surprised at this additional honour, that he began to fear a snake in the grass, and could not comprehend the reason of being thus [illegible]

* She had been educated by madame Colbert.

† This government was vacated by the death of Eugene Maurice of Saxony, count de Soissons, which happened June 7, 1673.

‡ Stephen d'Aligre was keeper of the seals in 1672, upon the death of chancellor Seguier, who was made chancellor of France in 1674.

with dignities: "Sire," said he to the king, "does your majesty intend to take the seals from me?"—"No, no, chancellor," replied the king, "go sleep in peace." And indeed, they say, he is almost always asleep: there are many wise conjectures on the subject, and people cannot understand the reason of this augmentation of favours.

The prince set out the day before yesterday, and M. de Turenne is to follow to-day. Write to Brancas, to congratulate him on his daughter's being in the queen's household, for he is very proud of it. La Troche returns you many thanks for your kind remembrance of her. Her son has still nose enough to lose half of it at the next siege, without the loss being very apparent. It is said that the *Dew* * begins to be less friendly with the *Torrent*, and that after the siege of Maëstricht, they entered into a league of mutual confidence, and saw the *Fire* and the *Snow* every day of their lives: you know all this could not last long, without occasioning great tumult, nor without being discovered. The *Hail* † seems to me, with respect to the reconciliation between you and him, like a man who goes to confession, and keeps one great sin upon his conscience: by what other name can you call the trick he has played you? Still the wise heads say, you must speak, you must ask, you have time, and that is sufficient: but do not you wonder at the faggoting of my letters? I leave one subject, you think I have done with it, and suddenly I resume it again, *versi sciolti*. Do you know that the marquis

* The *Dew*, the *Torrent*, the *Fire*, and the *Snow*, &c. are ciphers between the mother and daughter. These ciphers do not always mean the same persons. In this place, it seems that madame de Montespan is the *Torrent*, madame de Vallière the *Dew*, the king is the *Fire*, and the *Snow* represents the queen.

† Apparently the bishop of Marseilles.

de Sessac is here, that he will have a situation in the army, and will probably soon be presented to the king? This is manifestly predestination.

Corbinelli and I talk of Providence every day, and we say, as you know, from day to day, and hour to hour, that your journey is determined. You are very glad that you have not to answer for this affair; for a resolution is a wonderful thing for you, quite a wild beast. I have seen you a long time deciding on a colour: it is a proof of a too enlightened mind, which, seeing at one glance all the difficulties, remains suspended, as it were, like Mahomet's tomb: such was M. Bignon, the greatest wit of the age; I, who am the least of the present age, hate uncertainty, and love decision. M. de Pomponne informs me you received your leave of absence to-day: I am consequently ready to do every thing you wish, and to follow, or not to follow, the advice of your friends.

It is said here, that M. de Turenne has not yet begun his march, and that there is no farther occasion for it, because M. de Monterei has at last retreated, and M. de Luxembourg is freed, with the assistance of five or six thousand men, whom M. de Schomberg assembled, and with whom he so extremely harassed M. de Monterei, that he was obliged to retire with his troops. The prince is to be recalled, and all our poor friends with him: this is the news of the day.

The ball was dull, and ended at half past eleven. The king led out the queen: the dauphin, Madame; Monsieur, Mademoiselle; the prince de Conti, [illegible] Mademoiselle; the count de Roche-sur-Yon, Mademoiselle de Blois, handsome as an angel, dressed in black velvet, with a profusion of diamonds, and an apron and stomacher of point lace. The princess d'Harcourt was as pale as the Commandeur in the play du Festin de

Pierre. M. de Pomponne has desired me to dine with him to-morrow to meet Despréaux, who is to read his Art of Poetry.

LETTER CCLXXXII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Monday, Jan. 15, 1674.

SATURDAY last I dined with M. de Pomponne as I told you, and was there till five o'clock, enchanted, transported, enraptured, with the beauties of Despreaux's Art of Poetry; d'Hacqueville was there, we often talked of the pleasure you would have received from it. M. de Pomponne recollected that one day when you were a very little girl at your uncle de Sévigné's, you got behind a large window with your brother, and said you were a prisoner, a poor unfortunate princess driven from your father's house; your brother, who was as handsome as yourself, and you were as handsome as an angel, played his part extremely well: you were nine years of age. He made me remember the day perfectly; he never forgets one moment that he has seen you, and promises himself great pleasure in seeing you again, which is very gratifying to me. I own to you, my dear, that my heart is bursting with joy, but I shall conceal it till I know your resolution.

M. de Villars is returned home from Spain, and has given us a thousand amusing anecdotes respecting the Spaniards. I have at length seen La Marans in her cell, for it [illegible] nothing else. I found her quite in dishabille, [illegible] single hair upon her head, with a coarse coif of old Venice point, a black handkerchief on her neck, a faded grey gown, and an old petticoat. She seemed very glad to see me, we embraced each other tenderly. She does not seem at all changed; we began the conversation by talking of you; she appears to love you as

well as she ever did, and seemed so humble that it is impossible to help loving her. We then talked of the religious life she had lately embraced. She assured me it was true that God had vouchsafed her a great portion of grace, of which she had the most grateful sense: that this grace consists in great faith, profound love of God, horror for the world and its vanities, and a thorough distrust of herself; adding, that if she were to go abroad for only an hour, this divine spirit would evaporate. In short, she seems to preserve it carefully in her solitude like a bottle of fine perfume: she believes the world would make her lose this precious liquor, and she even fears the parade of devotion might spill it. Madame de Schomberg says she is not to be compared to madame de Marans. Her savage disposition is softened into a passion for retirement: the constitution does not change: she is even exempt from the folly common to most women, to love their confessor: she does not approve this tie, and never speaks to him but at confession. She goes on foot to her parish church; reads all our books of religion; works, prays; has a fixed time for every thing; takes all her meals in her own room; sees madame de Schomberg at a certain hour; hates news, as much as she used to like it; is as charitable to others, as she used to slander them; and loves the Creator, as much as she loved the creature. We laughed a good deal at her former manners, and turned them into ridicule: she has not the least air of the Collette sisters: she speaks very sincerely and very agreeably of her situation; I was two hours with her, without being at all dull: she reproached herself even for this pleasure, but without the least affectation; in short, she is much more amiable than she ever was. I do not think, my dear child, you can complain that I have not been particular enough.

I have just received your letter of the 7th. I own to

you, my dearest, that the joy it has given me is so lively that my heart can scarcely contain it: you know how strongly it feels, and I should hate myself, if I were so warmly interested in my own affairs as in yours. At last, my child, you are coming; this is the most delightful to me of all: but I am going to tell you something you do not expect, which is, that I solemnly swear to you, that if M. de la Garde had not deemed your journey expedient, and that if it really were not so for your own affairs, I would not have taken into consideration, at least for this year, the ardent desire I have to see you, nor what you owe to my infinite affection: I know how to keep within the bounds of reason, whatever it cost me, and I have sometimes as much strength in my weakness, as those who are wiser. After this sincere confession I cannot conceal from you that I am penetrated with joy, and that, reason concurring with my wishes, I am, at the moment I write to you, perfectly satisfied, so that I think of nothing now but of receiving you. Do you know, the best thing after yourself and M. de Grignan would be to bring the coadjutor? you will not perhaps always have La Garde; and if he fails you, you well know M. de Grignan is not so zealous in his own affairs as in those of the king, his master: he has a religious care of those, which can only be compared to his negligence with regard to his own. When he will take the trouble to speak, no one does it better, and we cannot therefore but wish it. You are not like madame de Cauvisson, to act alone; you must wait eight or ten years; but M. de Grignan, you, and the coadjutor, would do admirably together. Cardinal de Retz is just arrived, and will be delighted to see you. What joy, my dear child, will your return occasion! but above all things, come prudently. It is to M. de Grignan I give this charge, and I expect him to be accountable to me. I have written to the coad-

jutor, to entreat him to accompany you: he will facilitate our audience with the two ministers, and will support his brother's interest. The coadjutor is bold and fortunate, and you will mutually heighten each other's consequence: I could talk till this time to-morrow upon the subject. I have written to the archbishop. Gain my point with the coadjutor, and give him my letter.

The prince is come back, after having been thirty leagues on his journey. M. de Turenne did not go. M. de Monterei has withdrawn his forces, and M. de Luxembourg is now at liberty. Within these twenty-four hours the chapel at St. Germain has been robbed of a silver lamp, worth seventy thousand francs, and six candlesticks of the same metal, each of them taller than I am. This is a daring insolence *. The ropes they made use of, to get in, were found by the Richelieu gallery. No one can conceive how the robbery could have been committed, for there are guards continually going that way, and patrolling about all night.

Do you know that peace is talked of? M. de Chaulnes is since come from Britany, and is to set out again immediately for Cologne.

* The duke of Saint-Simon relates a still more extraordinary robbery that took place at Versailles. In one night all the gold ornaments and fringes were stolen from the state apartment, from the gallery to the chapel. Whatever inquiries were made, no trace could be found of the robber. But five or six days after, the king being at supper, an enormous packet fell suddenly upon the table at some distance from him: it contained the stolen fringes, with a note fastened to it with these words, "Bontems, take thy fringes again, the pleasure pass not half the pain." Saint-Simon was a witness of this.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

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